

A PROFILE OF THE NONTRADITIONAL COLLEGE STUDENT AND
IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES

A Dissertation
Presented to
The School of Graduate Studies
Drake University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
James E. Bodensteiner
June 1985

1985

.2632

©1986

JAMES EDWARD BODENSTEINER

All Rights Reserved

WILEY


539565


A PROFILE OF THE NONTRADITIONAL COLLEGE STUDENT AND
IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES

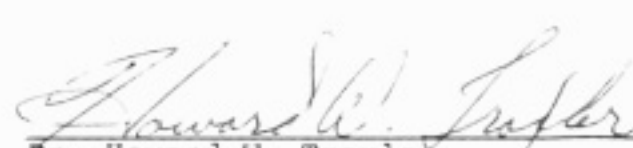
by


James E. Bodensteiner

Approved by Committee:


Dr. Lawrence E. Fanning, Chair


Dr. Charles S. Greenwood


Dr. Howard W. Traxler


Dr. W. Russell Abell
Dean of the School of Graduate Studies

A PROFILE OF THE NONTRADITIONAL COLLEGE STUDENT AND
IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES

An abstract of a Dissertation by
James E. Bodensteiner
June 1985
Drake University
Advisor: Dr. Lawrence E. Fanning

The problem. This study examined the growing number of college students outside the traditional eighteen to twenty-three year old age group often referred to as nontraditional students. For this study, nontraditional student was defined as any undergraduate student age twenty-five or older. The purpose of the study was to identify who these students were, why they were entering or returning to college, how the college experience affected their lives, and what can be done by colleges and universities to facilitate their college experience.

Procedure. The data were gathered from the registrar's office and through the use of a questionnaire sent to 680 nontraditional students and returned by 404. This 59 percent return rate assured a 95 percent confidence level.

Findings. Most of the nontraditional students were found to be in the twenty-five to thirty-four year old age group, married, parents and employed. The average course load was nine hours. Most were in college for career-related reasons although personal growth also ranked high. The nontraditional students indicated that they interrelated well with traditional students and their instructors and generally felt very positive about the effects of college attendance. They felt that their age and experiences caused them to have more to contribute in class than the younger students. College attendance did not seem to adversely affect their relationships with family and friends except that free time was very limited. However, the college experience of nontraditional students was found to be very different from that of their traditional age counterparts. Nontraditional students attend almost no campus events and lead very busy lives dividing their time among their jobs, families and classes. They do not enjoy the camaraderie of traditional students.

Recommendations. To facilitate the college experience for these nontraditional students, institutions can simplify registration procedures, provide office hours in the evenings, schedule more evening classes, provide support groups and newsletters and increase the level of sensitivity to the unique situations of nontraditional students.

Table of Contents

	Page
List of Tables	vi
Chapter	
1. The Nontraditional College Student	1
Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem	6
2. Review of the Literature	8
3. Methods and Procedures	28
4. Report of the Findings	32
Age, Sex and Ethnic Group	33
Marital and Family Status	34
Grade Classification, Declared Major, Semester Hour Load and Transfer Hours	36
ACT, High School Graduating Class Rank and Grade Point Averages	37
Employment, Income and Housing Status	38
When Respondents First Attended College	42
Reasons for Attending College	47
Financing College	48
Use of Campus Services and Events	50
In-Class Behavior and Relationships with Instructors and Other Students	51
Where and When Nontraditional Students Study	56
Personal Feelings about Entering UNI	58

Chapter	Page
Effects of College Attendance on Feelings About Self	60
Effects of College Attendance upon Relationships with Spouse or Others you Live with and Friends	63
The Most Desirable Times to Attend Class	67
Extent of Satisfaction with College	68
What UNI Could to to Enhance the Respondents' College Experience and Make it More Convenient, Enjoyable and Profitable	69
5. Summary, Analysis, and Conclusions	77
Bibliography	100
Appendixes	
A. Enrollment Statistics for Institutions of Higher Education and Population Statistics	103
B. Cover Letter	107
C. Survey of UNI Students	109
D. Respondent Comments	116

TABLES

Table	Page
1. Percent Change in College Enrollment by Age Groups, 1970 to 1978	3
2. Age of the Questionnaire Respondents	33
3. Marital Status of the Respondents	35
4. Survey Respondents with Children in Their Homes	36
5. Employment Status of the Respondents	39
6. Occupations of the Respondents Who are Employed	40
7. Household Income of the Respondents	42
8. Respondents' Reasons for not Starting College Immediately After High School	43
9. Number of Colleges Attended in Addition to UNI	45
10. Reasons for Leaving the First College Attended	46
11. Respondents' Reasons for Attending College	47
12. Occupations that Respondents Hoped to Obtain Upon College Completion	48
13. How Respondents Finance Their Education	49
14. Use of Campus Services	50
15. Number of Times Respondents Attended Campus Events	51
16. How Often do You Speak in Class Compared to Other Students?	52
17. Do You Feel That You have More to Offer in Class Because of Your Experience?	53

Table	Page
18. Do Instructors Call on You More Often than Younger Students?	54
19. Do You Think You Visit More Often or Less Often with Instructors Outside of Class?	55
20. Do You Feel that Instructors are Intimidated by You?	55
21. Nontraditional Students' Feelings Toward Younger Students	56
22. Where Nontraditional Students Study	57
23. When Nontraditional Students Study	58
24. Concerns or Feelings of Nontraditional Students When They First Attended UNI	59
25. Effects of College Attendance on Feelings About Self	61
26. Effects of College Attendance on Relationships with Spouse or Living Partner(s)	63
27. Effects of College Attendance on Relationships with Friends	65
28. Most Desirable Times to Attend Classes	68
29. Respondents' Extent of Satisfaction with College	69
30. Suggestions for the University from Nontraditional Students	70

CHAPTER ONE

The Nontraditional College Student

Introduction

The topic of this study is the nontraditional college student. This student is sometimes referred to as the older student, the adult student or the mature student. For purposes of this study, the nontraditional student will be defined as any undergraduate student who is age twenty-five or older. The minimum age has been set at age twenty-five because, assuming that the most common undergraduate years are age eighteen to twenty-two, this still allows three years for things like taking five years to graduate, allowing some time for military service and other reasons that can delay a student for several years. The person must be enrolled in college work; he/she does not have to be pursuing a degree or enrolled full time or meet any other specific qualifications. This type of data will be revealed in the study. Only undergraduate students are being studied because it is not that nontraditional for older students to return to college for graduate study. In fact, certain groups, such as teachers, are more likely to go to graduate school after age twenty-five than before.

This type of study seems timely today in light of

recent studies and statistics which show that colleges and universities have older student bodies than they formerly did. Undergraduate student bodies do not fall within the eighteen to twenty-two age group to as great an extent as they did in past years. As one walks across campuses today, one will notice that the majority of the student body still is of the traditional age but there is an increasing number who are older. Table 1 illustrates just how dramatic the increase in student body age has been throughout the 1970's, especially among women. For men age twenty-five to twenty-nine there has been a 34.8 percent increase; for men age thirty to thirty-four there has been an 85.2 percent increase. However, for women during this same time period the increases have been a remarkable 173.3 percent and 209.1 percent, respectively.

The concept of the older college student body is further illustrated by Appendix A, reproduced from the National Center for Education Statistics. As the table shows, in 1970 the percentage of total college enrollment age twenty-five and over was estimated to be 28 percent, by 1980 it was estimated at 38 percent and by 1990 the percentage of the total college enrollment age twenty-five and older is projected to be 47 percent or about one-half of the student body.

Table 1
Percent Change in College Enrollment by Age Groups
1970 to 1978

	Male	Female
14 to 17 years old	-18.5	+29.2
18 to 19 years old	+ 3.3	+20.8
20 and 21 years old	+11.0	+41.6
22 to 24 years old	+14.0	+70.4
25 to 29 years old	+34.8	+173.3
30 to 34 years old	+85.2	+209.1

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 335, April 1979.

Historically there is a precedent for a large volume of older students returning to college campuses. This occurred as large numbers of discharged World War II veterans began attending college after the war. However, this movement was significantly different from what is happening today in that the veterans were a very homogeneous group, predominantly male, mostly in their late twenties and early thirties, and motivated, at least in part, by the G.I. Bill. They were preparing for a career and their role as breadwinners. Today's returning students seem to be a much more diverse group.

There are a wide variety of reasons offered as to why more older students are enrolling today than before. One

reason may concern the changing population in various age groups. As Appendices B and C illustrate, the eighteen to twenty-four year old age group, the traditional mainstay of college enrollments, is projected to decrease during the 1980's while the twenty-five to sixty-four year old age group is projected to rise rather dramatically and the sixty-five plus age group will increase slightly. As their traditional students decline in number, colleges and universities will increasingly focus their attention on the older prospective students.

Some speculate that the women's movement has caused many older women to re-evaluate their life styles and adjust their personal and career goals in such a way so that more education is needed. This is especially true among women whose children are raised and who are not needed to as great an extent in the home. This is sometimes referred to as the "displaced homemaker syndrome." Some women returning to college are seeking to remedy what they feel has been a life-long neglect of their career needs and interests.¹

Others feel that the complex demands of the work place and the nature of jobs today require many people to go back to college in search of retraining or recertification to

¹Arthur W. Chickering and Associates, The Modern American College (Washington: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1981), p. 645.

update their job skills or to enhance their position in the job market. Often older learners are prompted to return to school by the realization that their knowledge and skills have become obsolete. Many older learners are concerned with overcoming the obsolescence they are experiencing from the vast technological changes that have occurred since they last attended school. They feel the need to update their information and to learn modern skills, techniques and strategies.¹

Personal growth and enhancement are also offered as reasons why older people go back to college. Some adults wish to revitalize areas of knowledge that had been set aside at an earlier time in their lives. Some wish to pursue a newly developed interest or a cultural interest.²

Today it is more acceptable for the nontraditional student to appear on campus. As awareness of older students increases the nontraditional student is less likely to feel out of place and intimidated by the idea of attending college. In fact, some older people return to college to look for relationship possibilities.

Another reason for the influx of nontraditional students concerns the fact that there is an emphasis today

¹Chickering and Associates, p. 645.

²Ibid.

on life-long learning. There is a realization today that college isn't just for young people any more. This point has been made time and again in promotional efforts by colleges and universities as they increase their efforts to attract this type of student. As colleges become victims of declining enrollments they begin to reach out to nontraditional populations to fill their classes.

Statement of the Problem

In view of the current trends in education discussed above, there is a need to identify more clearly who these nontraditional students are in terms of demographic data, what particular needs these students have, how these needs are currently being met by a particular institution, and what, if anything, an institution might change or adjust to better serve the nontraditional college student.

More specifically, this study will seek to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the nontraditional student?
2. What are the primary motivational factors that influenced the student's entry into or return to college at an older age?
3. What particular fears or concerns do nontraditional students have about returning to college?
4. How has the return to college affected their feelings about themselves and how has it affected their relationships with others?
5. Which college student services do nontraditional students use most?

6. How does the nontraditional student relate to instructors and to other students?
7. What are nontraditional students most likely to major in and which careers are they most likely to pursue?
8. What might colleges and universities do in terms of both services and instruction to facilitate the college experience for nontraditional students?

A study of this type should be very significant to colleges and universities in the 1980's and beyond as they seek to recruit, serve and satisfy the ever-increasing body of nontraditional students, especially in times of a declining traditional age population.

In this study the nontraditional student studied at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, Iowa. Information was gathered through an interview schedule and also from the demographic data available in the registrar's office. Before the methods for this study are discussed in detail, however, Chapter Two will present a review of the literature that dealt with the nontraditional student.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of the Literature

Most of the research that has been done concerning the nontraditional student was conducted in the 1970's and 1980's. The obvious reason for this is that during the last decade the nontraditional student became a much more common and sought after commodity within student ranks. Prior to the 1970's the most obvious example of the nontraditional or mature student was the returning veteran after World War II. However, as mentioned in Chapter One, these students were a much more homogeneous student group than the diverse, mature student groups on campuses today. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the research findings and writings that are similar and relevant to this study.

One recent study, by Lewis C. Solomon and Joanne J. Gordon, dealt with the characteristics and needs of adults in post-secondary education. They used the data that was acquired through a survey done by the Higher Education Research Institute and the Cooperative Institutional Research Program in their analyses of thirteen cohorts of first-year college freshmen entering approximately 600 colleges across the United States between 1966 and 1978. These groups contained many adult students. They found that

between 1972 and 1978 there was an increase of almost 1.5 million in the adult students' population age twenty-five and older. The most common age group for adults was the twenty-five to thirty-four group. Twice as many students were found in this group as in the age thirty-five plus group.¹

Solomon and Gordon also found that most traditional-age, undergraduate students were enrolled in college full time (88 percent in 1972 and 84 percent in 1978) while a majority of adult students in the twenty-five to thirty-four age range were enrolled part time (59 percent in 1972 and 63 percent in 1978).²

This study also revealed that in 1966 women comprised 29 percent of all the adults in colleges. By 1978 women had become 57 percent of all the adults in colleges.³ The authors suggest that changing attitudes concerning women were responsible for a large part of this increase in their college attendance.

A higher proportion of adults of both sexes were nonwhites as compared with traditional-age students and the

¹Lewis C. Solomon and Joanne J. Gordon, The Characteristics and Needs of Adults in Postsecondary Education (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath and Company, 1981), pp. 4-5.

²Ibid., p. 5.

³Ibid., p. 15.

growth of nonwhite representation was much more rapid among the adults than among the traditional-age students.¹

Adults attending college were found to be split about evenly in terms of marriage.² However, it was found very decisively that the parents of traditional-age students were much more likely than those of the adults to have had at least some education beyond high school.³ Thus it becomes apparent that while the education of parents is a significant predictor of the educational attainment of traditional-aged students, it is not as accurate with nontraditional students.

Jerrold W. Apps studied the adult learner and also found that adults returning to college are more often women than men, are most often between the ages of twenty and thirty-nine, have a better formal education than those who do not return and are likely to be employed in professional or technical work. The most common reason he found for people returning was related to occupation. Other reasons mentioned were the social acceptability of adults in college, life enhancement, a change in life situation, the premium put on degrees, and college recruiting. Often

¹Solomon and Gordon, p. 19.

²Ibid., p. 22.

³Ibid., p. 25.

there is more than one reason.¹ It should be mentioned, however, that Apps studied graduate as well as undergraduate students.

In a survey of 343 students, age twenty-five and older, at the University of Houston, Jane T. Malin and others found that the students were relatively young, most being twenty-five to twenty-nine, were primarily working, married and without children. This study showed that many were returning because they were seeking job changes and also because they had strong intellectual interests. They also reported that women were more satisfied with college than men and reported somewhat more affective changes than did men.²

The young adult age group was also found to be the most popular group in a study reported by Solomon Arbeiter in "Profile of the Adult Learner." Arbeiter found that 38-42 percent of adult students are in the twenty-five to thirty-four age group while only 15 percent are over forty-four.³ The literature consistently points to this age group as the

¹Jerrold W. Apps, The Adult Learner on Campus (Chicago: Follett Publishing, 1981), pp. 36-37.

²Jane T. Malin and Others, Adults Attending College: Goals and Change (ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 177 325).

³Solomon Arbeiter, "Profile of the Adult Learner," The College Board Review, Winter 1976-77, pp. 20-27.

most common age group for nontraditional adult learners.

David Lutz studied external degree candidates in three different programs in Connecticut and found that the typical candidate was more likely to be male than female, was 37.5 years old, a resident of a suburban community, and a full-time employee in business, industry, or government in a professional, administrative or skilled position. The candidate earned at least a high school diploma, usually attended two colleges and had fifty-nine semester credits. Generally he found these students to be highly motivated, that they had learned much from life's experiences and were seeking to earn a college degree at the lowest possible cost.¹

As a result of these findings, Lutz suggests that institutions of higher education change scheduling patterns so that more courses, particularly upper level courses, are available in the evenings and on weekends. He further suggests that more opportunities be made available for academic advising for adult students and that learning resource centers be made available for adults.

There are many reasons offered as to why the number of adult students is increasing so dramatically. Arthur

¹David A. Lutz, "Who are the Nontraditional Learners?" The College Board Review, Fall 1978, pp. 26-30.

Chickering, in Commuting Versus Resident Students, says that:

. . . men moving into new employment and women resuming interrupted careers or pursuing delayed interests are seeking extension courses, correspondence studies, new degree programs, and numerous less institutionalized opportunities for education and in-service training.¹

In a 1977 study by John Bishop and Jane Van Dyk in which a sample of 57,689 individuals living in Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas were studied, the authors mentioned three commonly given reasons for the rising participation of adults in higher education:

1. the increased numbers of conveniently located colleges offering courses tailored to meet the special needs of adults,
2. the need to learn new skills as old ones become obsolete due to technological progress, and
3. the increasing desire of men and women to obtain training that will make possible professional advancement.²

These writers also found that the adult students preferred two-year colleges because they usually have lower tuition and easier admission policies.³ Adult students were

¹Arthur W. Chickering, Commuting Versus Resident Students (Washington: Jossey-Bass, 1974), p. 16.

²John Bishop and Jane Van Dyk, "Can Adults be Hooked on College?" Journal of Higher Education, January/February 1977, pp. 39-59.

³Ibid., p. 47.

found to be more responsive to tuition levels than recent high school graduates.¹

Concerning fees, Bishop and Van Dyk felt that the current fee structure of many colleges discriminate against part-time students who usually pay so much per credit hour, while full-time students can usually pay full-time tuition for about twelve hours and then take another three to six hours at no extra cost.

Some interesting personal characteristics were found among adult students sampled in this study. It was revealed that the older the individual the less likely he or she was to take credit courses. The presence of children in the family reduced attendance of both the husband and wife. The authors concluded that the time required for parenting plus the additional financial pressures that children provide made it difficult for parents to attend college. For wives it was found that children under age six significantly hindered attendance while for husbands children of any age had a negative effect.²

In this study, government employees and professional technical workers were substantially more likely to be attending college than others because, as is the case with

¹Bishop and Van Dyk, p. 53.

²Ibid., p. 48.

teachers, promotion and salary are often contingent upon completion of academic course work. The availability of the G.I. Bill was also found to play a significant, positive effect in determining attendance.¹

The presence of many more adults on campuses has opened up many new challenges for the educational institutions. Two researchers from Eastern Illinois University set out to examine the attitudes and perceptions of adult students at that institution. They sent questionnaires to eighty-nine students, age thirty or older, who were enrolled at the University on a full-time basis during the 1979 spring semester.²

They found that over one-half of the students returned for career-related reasons, such as preparation for new careers or advancement in present fields. Some came back for self-fulfillment reasons. About one-half of the students indicated that they could have benefited from an orientation program held specifically for adults. Many of the adults were commuters and preferred day classes because of family obligations in the evenings. Seventy-nine percent of the adult students perceived themselves as having needs

¹Bishop and Van Dyk, p. 49.

²Melanie Rawlins and Kathy Davies, "Today's Challenge: Adults in College," Lifelong Learning: The Adult Years, May 1981, pp. 12-13, 27.

different from those of their younger colleagues in terms of family, home, and work responsibilities. Eighty-two percent wanted an adult-oriented brochure containing information about university programs and services. They did not feel that they were as well informed as they would like to be about the student services available to them. A significant number also expressed an interest in having some place made available where they could stay overnight in the event of hazardous road conditions.¹

As a result of these responses recommendations were made to Eastern Illinois University officials concerning an adult orientation program, more daytime, undergraduate classes, a guide for returning adults, a club for adult students to meet with their peers, housing for commuters, and faculty development to increase awareness of the unique needs of these students and to foster expertise in working with them.²

Martha L. Farmer found that certain common educational problems were encountered by adults. A poor educational background often necessitates refresher courses in basic skill areas. She feels that part of the problem is that much of what was learned in high school is now of limited

¹Rawlins and Davies, pp. 12-13, 27.

²Ibid.

value. Adults sometimes need to relearn study skills. A lack of confidence is a problem for some adults as they attempt to cope with a problem that is new to them. Some students do not have an accurate assessment of their personal capabilities. Adult students may find that their values and life styles are in conflict with their younger counterparts on campus. An orientation could be beneficial for adults to be able to cut through the red tape of a university setting.¹

These and vocational counseling are common concerns that college counseling centers must be prepared to deal with as non-traditional students increase on campus. This could involve hiring people with expertise in this area, retraining current staff, and adjusting the hours of the counselors so that they are available.

Novak and Shriberg make the point that adults are likely to need a certain amount of orientation in things like library use and term paper writing in which recent high school graduates may be relatively skilled. They suggest that student development workers work with both college staff members and individual students to help the groups

¹Martha L. Farmer, Counseling Services for Adults in Higher Education (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1971).

understand each other.¹

Other parts of the literature also indicate that colleges and universities must make adjustments if they wish to attract and retain nontraditional students. Donna S. Queeney, in an article entitled "Adult Learners: A Focus on Who They Are, What They Need, and the Problems They Face," states that colleges and universities can attract and retain adult students with a minimum of effort and expense by providing several specific services. First, more evening classes with a range of courses are needed; second, special counseling geared specifically to the adult student is needed; and third, institutions need an office which provides easy and efficient access to information about the institutions. Adults who have been away from college a while, or who have never been to college, can easily be frightened and intimidated if they do not have some form of "welcome" when they decide to come aboard.²

Queeney also found that for the most part, adults were not greatly interested in the traditional liberal arts subjects and in public affairs, but rather were more likely

¹Frank R. DiSilvestro, ed., Advising and Counseling Adult Learners (Washington: Jossey-Bass, 1981).

²Donna S. Queeney, "Adult Learners: A Focus on Who They Are, What They Need, and the Problems They Face," Continuing Higher Education, Spring 1984, pp. 2-6.

to be enrolled in courses related directly to their occupations. They want to be able to see how they may use the information they are acquiring.¹

In order to succeed in college, Queeney found that adults need certain specific types of assistance. They need counseling to help them deal with problems that occur as a result of combining college, work and family life. They may need help in sorting out all the roles they are expected to play; time management can be a problem. They also need help with course selection because their goals and needs tend to be very specific. Sometimes they need their self-confidence bolstered because, among other things, they do not know how the system works. Still other adult students need help in brushing up rusty study skills. They often find that colleges and universities wish to attract adult students but that most of their services are not readily available for adults.²

One reason why colleges and universities may have difficulties in meeting the support needs of the nontraditional students centers around the fact that the adults are so much more diverse than the traditional-aged students. In comparing adult learners and traditional age

¹Queeney, p. 4.

²Ibid., p. 5.

students, Kuh and Sturgis found that the adult learners needed more help in formulating realistic expectations concerning what the institution can and cannot do. Adult learners did not perceive the university environment as being very supportive or tolerant of their individual differences.¹

In line with this idea of the diversity of adult learners, Barry R. Morstain and John C. Smart did an in-depth study to learn the reasons or motivations which influenced adults to pursue further education. They categorized the adult learners in five ways. It was found that from one group the primary reason for returning to college centered around an interest in creating or improving social interactions and personal associations.

A second group was categorized as stimulation seeking. These people returned to school because of the desire to escape from the routine and boredom in either their personal or occupational lives. It is likely that they would be interested in expanding their horizons by the challenge of intellectual pursuits.

Another group was found to be primarily interested in

¹George D. Kuh and J. Thomas Sturgis, "Looking at the University Through Different Sets of Lens: Adult Learners and Traditional Age Students' Perceptions of the University Environments," Journal of College Student Personnel, November 1980, pp. 483-90.

career advancement. These people seemed to be most attracted to those learning activities which they saw as being directly related to their current or evolving career or occupational interests.

A fourth group was characterized as interested in a life change. These individuals appear to have a need to improve several aspects of their lives--the occupational, the need for intellectual stimulation and social relationships.

They found that the largest single group consisted of what they called nondirected learners. These people seemed to have no single compelling reason for attending college and seemed to be quite like many traditional undergraduates in this regard. Perhaps these particular students could have profited most from counseling.¹

Kuh and Ardaiole compared first-year adult learners, age twenty-three and older, with the traditional-age freshmen. Their research supported several commonly held assumptions about nontraditional students. It was found that more fathers of traditional-age freshmen tended to hold professional/white collar positions than those of nontraditional students. Traditional-age freshmen had

¹Barry R. Morstain and John C. Smart, "A Motivational Typology of Adult Learners," Journal of Higher Education, November-December 1977, pp. 665-79.

higher high school grade point averages than their older counterparts and also had higher aspirations for their present and future academic degree plans. For example, over twice as many traditional-age freshmen reported that they were going to major in the physical sciences than nontraditional students. Nontraditional students worked less desirable hours and participated very little in extracurricular activities.¹

The authors concluded that the lower high school grade point averages and the long absences from academic endeavors support the need for more student services such as counseling, advising and help with study skills for the nontraditional students.

In a study of undergraduate students over thirty years of age at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, Melanie Rawlins found that returning older students felt that their needs were somewhat different from those of traditional-aged students. Specifically adult students mentioned that they had more responsibilities in terms of family, home and work. There were difficulties arising from the break in formal learning experiences; they had limited time to spend on their studies; and that professors often did not

¹George D. Kuh and Frank P. Ardaiole, "Adult Learners and Traditional Age Freshmen: Comparing the 'New' Pool with the 'Old' Pool of Students," Research in Higher Education, 10, No. 3 (1979), 207-19.

understand their unique situations.¹

Rawlins found that these students needed more assistance with things like interpreting curriculum, evaluating prior academic work, and planning a program of study. They also felt that an orientation session would help them through the red tape of the re-entry process. In addition, they felt that there would be some advantage in having a particular person or office whose primary task was to inform these students of how the university functioned. They seemed to think that they wasted too much time aimlessly trying to find their way around campus.²

The idea that nontraditional students have certain needs not common to traditional students was supported by a study done by three staff members at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. The authors found that the most needed service was a designated re-entry admission counselor. The second most needed service was for an appropriate orientation to campus. They also asked for a specialized re-entry credit course, peer counselors and an exclusive lounge area. To a lesser extent, but still requested by 50 to 60 percent of the nontraditional

¹Melanie E. Rawlins, "Life Made Easier for the Over-Thirty Undergrads," Personnel and Guidance Journal, October 1979, pp. 139-43.

²Ibid., p. 141.

students, were individual counseling, career exploration and educational-vocational information counseling.¹

Kasworm, in her study of student services for the older undergraduate student, also found that student services were oriented to the traditional-aged student. On-campus services such as housing, health care, student union activities and religious centers are geared primarily for traditional students. In this study older students reported less usage of the available services, perhaps because student services did not deal with their needs.²

Though the above-quoted literature most often mentions the twenty-five to thirty-four year old as the most common adult student, Ruth Weinstock, in The Graying of the Campus, found that older Americans are beginning to become a significant segment of college populations also. During the 1974-1975 school year people over age sixty-five made up 2.9 percent of the total number of adults participating in education. Those age fifty-five to sixty-four made up 6.6 percent of this group. Thus a total of 9.5 percent of those participating in education over the age of seventeen were

¹Larry M. Lance, Joan Lourie and Cynthia Mayo, "Needs of Re-entry University Students," November 1979, pp. 479-85.

²Carol E. Kasworm, "Student Services for the Older Undergraduate Student," Journal of College Student Personnel, March 1980, pp. 163-69.

over the age of fifty-five.¹ This has become a group that educational institutions cannot afford to ignore. Furthermore, current population projections have older Americans increasing as a percentage of the total population. Thus they may very well merit even more attention on campuses.

Several institutions have developed some interesting programs with regard to the older student. Ohio State University has adopted a program called Program 60 for persons age sixty and over. It started in 1974 with sixty registrants and had 600 within three years.² Fordham University in New York started the College at Sixty program in 1973 with a dozen students and a curriculum designed for older students; now it is a flourishing enterprise.³ Clemson University in South Carolina has started a College Week for Senior Citizens.⁴ Many campuses have various versions of the Elderhostel program.

Because the elderly have ample time and, in many cases, ample money, they deserve to be a very logical target for college recruitment. In many cases, however, the programs

¹Ruth Weinstock, The Graying of the Campus (New York: Educational Facilities Laboratories, 1978), p. 28.

²Ibid., p. 27.

³Ibid., p. 15.

⁴Ibid., p. 49.

will have to be designed rather specifically for them because they frequently do not want the traditional curriculum that would most often be attractive to the young adult student.

Finally, the mature student has been analyzed in terms of instructor-student relationships. Jerry and Sally Gaff studied the mature student and concluded that many have had life experiences that add new dimensions to student-faculty relationships. Because they have had many more life experiences, have traveled more, have worked in various settings, dealt with more personal crises, and have had more opportunities to be independent and responsible for themselves, older learners can be a rich resource for any classroom. If a teacher handles the situation properly much wisdom can be drawn from the adult learner. In some cases, instructors may be a bit intimidated by the adult student especially if the instructor is quite young and lacking in experience related to the subject matter.¹

Because adults have more demands put upon their time, they have less time to cultivate relationships with teachers. They would be less likely to have the time to socialize with instructors.

Adults expect faculty to relate knowledge to each other

¹Chickering, p. 644.

and to the fabric of the larger society rather than just teach specific subjects. Because of their experiences adults are often more demanding consumers of education than traditional-age students. They tend to be more goal oriented and pragmatic than younger learners.¹

In summary, the available research describes the typical, nontraditional student as being age twenty-five to thirty-four, a woman, more likely to be attending college part-time than his/her traditional counterparts, less well academically prepared, very motivated and goal oriented, returning to seek job skills, and in need of certain services for which traditional-aged students do not have as great a need.

Colleges and universities are starting to tune into the needs of the nontraditional student and many new programs may be developing as the awareness of these students increases.

¹Chickering, p. 644.

CHAPTER THREE

Methods and Procedures

The purpose of this chapter is to detail the methods and procedures used to examine the nontraditional college student.

The sample students used in this study consisted of nontraditional students currently attending the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, Iowa. Henceforth, this University will be referred to as UNI. A brief portrait of UNI follows.

UNI is one of Iowa's three institutions of higher education governed by the State Board of Regents. It was established in 1876 as the Iowa State Normal School with its principal mission being the training of teachers.

Since its establishment, the institution has undergone several name changes. In 1909 it was renamed the Iowa State Teachers College. In 1961 the name was changed to the State College of Iowa and in 1967 the institution adopted its current name, the University of Northern Iowa.

Along with the change in names, the mission and the composition have gradually changed also. Today UNI perceives itself as a more well-rounded institution with the

School of Business exceeding the College of Education in enrollment of undergraduate students.

UNI currently offers a wide range of fully accredited undergraduate and graduate degree programs in liberal and vocational arts.

Presently five undergraduate baccalaureate degrees are offered: the Bachelor of Arts, the Bachelor of Fine Arts, the Bachelor of Music, the Bachelor of Technology, and the Bachelor of Liberal Studies.

Graduate degree majors are available in most departments and all departments offer graduate level courses. UNI offers six graduate degrees: the Master of Arts, the Master of Arts in Education, the Master of Business Administration, the Master of Music, the sixth-year Specialist in Education and the Doctorate in Education.

Currently, UNI has an enrollment of over 11,000 students. The majority of these students come from a radius of one hundred miles of the Cedar Falls area, and a very high majority are from Iowa.

UNI is located in Cedar Falls which has a population of approximately 35,000. Along with neighboring Waterloo and several contiguous smaller communities, the entire metropolitan area totals approximately 120,000. This area is in northeast Iowa and not near another metropolitan area.

The only other institution of higher education in the community is a state-supported vocational-technical

school. The closest four-year degree-granting institution is Wartburg College in Waverly which is about fifteen miles north of Cedar Falls.

The first task in selecting the sample for this study was to consult the registrar's office and obtain the exact number of students who meet the definition of one qualifying to be included in the study; in other words, age twenty-five or older and an undergraduate student. This number was 1,719. From the registrar's office were also obtained the indicated majors, race, grade points, American College Test (ACT) results, high school decile ranks and grade classifications of these students. When applicable, the mean scores are reported for these items.

The remainder of the demographic data, including age, sex, number of hours enrolled during the semester, marital and family status, employment, income and residential status were acquired from the random sample that responded to a questionnaire. The information concerning motivational factors, feelings, fears, concerns, relationships, career goals and the use of student services was also acquired by the use of the questionnaire.

In the use of the questionnaire, it was decided that from the total number of 1,719 students, about 340 completed questionnaires would be needed in order for the results to be reliable at the 95 percent confidence level. Figuring that there would be about a 50 percent return rate, 680

questionnaires were sent out on May 15, 1984. Of these, 404 were returned for a return rate of 59 percent, thus assuring a 95 percent confidence level. A copy of the cover letter and questionnaire are found in the Appendix. Each letter and questionnaire was accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

The information gathered by the questionnaire was reported by using raw scores and descriptive statistics such as the mean and median. Also, in some cases, the inferential statistic, chi square, was used to test for significant relationships. Along with the reporting of the data, observations, summaries and conclusions accompanied each category of data. Crosstabulations were done in order to determine whether there were any significant relationships between any of the questions and the demographic characteristics of the respondents. In those cases where a significant relationship was found, it was reported in the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

Report of the Findings

This chapter will report and discuss the information on the nontraditional students at UNI obtained previously through the use of a questionnaire and partially through the use of data obtained from the registrar's office. The usual pattern will be to report the data and follow the report with an analysis or any pertinent insights that the data reveal. Tables are interspersed throughout the narrative in those places where they are felt to be appropriate. Each separate category of data is accompanied by its own heading. Periodically, the information presented is compared to a similar statistic for traditional-aged students. This information was acquired from "A Profile of Students Enrolled at UNI, Fall Semester, 1983" compiled by the UNI Office of Student Research.

The first stage of the findings reported is the demographic profile. As indicated in Chapter Three, some of this data was acquired on all 1,719 of the students, while the rest of the data is reported for only the 404 who returned the questionnaire. This distinction is made in the report.

Age, Sex and Ethnic Group

The mean age of the questionnaire respondents was found to be 32.2 (see Table 1). The mean age for all 1,719 of the nontraditional students was 32.5. Female respondents were older than the male respondents; 82.3 percent of the males were age twenty-five to thirty-four while only 60.4 percent of the women were. Over 31 percent of the women were age thirty-five to forty-four while only 13.4 percent of the men were in this category. The average undergraduate at this time was 21.9 years old, thus the nontraditional students are usually in classes with students who have about a decade fewer experiences than they have.

Table 2
Age of the Questionnaire Respondents

Age Group	f	Percent	
		Relative	Adjusted
25-34	280	69.3	69.3
35-44	98	24.3	24.3
45-54	25	6.2	6.2
55-64	<u>1</u>	<u>0.2</u>	<u>0.2</u>
Total	404	100.0	100.0
Mean = 32.243; Median = 30.339; Std. Dev. = 6.580			

Of the respondents to the questionnaire, 240, or 59.4 percent, were female and 164, or 40.6 percent, were male. Of all of the 1,719 nontraditional students, 921, or 53.6 percent, were female and 798, or 46.4 percent, were male. This would seem to indicate that a higher percentage of females chose to return the questionnaire. The higher incidence of females among nontraditional students for this study is consistent with other studies of nontraditional students. Interestingly enough, these figures correspond quite closely with the total UNI undergraduate population at this time which was 54.3 percent female and 45.7 percent male.

When enrolling in the university, 20.4 percent of the 1,719 nontraditional students chose not to list their ethnic code. Of the 79.6 percent that did answer, 73.7 percent were white, 3.6 percent were black, and 2.3 percent categorized themselves as Alaskan, Asian, Hispanic or non-resident alien. The 3.6 percent black population was slightly higher than the undergraduate population as a whole, which was 2 percent.

Marital and Family Status

Table 3 illustrates the marital status of the respondents. For the entire group of 1,719, 845, or 54.7 percent, were married. The slightly higher incidence of marriage among the respondents indicated a greater propensity for married students to respond to the survey.

The marriage data showed that 54.5 percent of the respondents in the age category twenty-five to thirty-four were married compared to 72.2 percent age thirty-five to forty-four and 61.5 percent age forty-five and older. In sharp contrast, only about 5 percent of the traditional age undergraduate students were married.

Table 3
Marital Status of the Respondents

Marital Status	f	Percent Relative	Adjusted
Never Married	81	20.0	20.1
Married	238	58.9	59.2
Separated-Divorced	76	18.8	18.9
Widowed	7	1.7	1.7
Spoiled Response	1	0.2	N/A
No Data	<u>1</u>	<u>0.2</u>	<u>N/A</u>
Total	404	100.0	100.0

As expected, a majority of the nontraditional students also had children living with them. Table 4 gives the exact percentages. The crosstabulations showed that 70.9 percent of the females had children while only 41.1 percent of the men did. This is interesting in view of the fact that the percentages of men and women married were about equal; 58.6 percent of the men and 59.6 percent of the women. Obviously

the nontraditional student group included more single women with children than single men with children. This is consistent with the trends of the society at large.

Table 4
Survey Respondents with Children in Their Homes

Parent or Guardian	f	Percent	
		Relative	Adjusted
Yes	235	58.2	58.8
No	165	40.8	41.3
No Data	<u>4</u>	<u>1.0</u>	<u>N/A</u>
Total	404	100.0	100.0

Grade Classification, Declared Major, Semester
Hour Load and Transfer Hours

Of all 1,719 nontraditional students, the average grade classification was 2.443 or about one-half through the junior year. Of those responding, 1,296, or 75 percent, had a declared major. The following are the five most frequently declared majors:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Accounting | 124 |
| 2. Computer Science | 90 |
| 3. Nursing (Pre-professional) | 64 |
| 4. Industrial Arts (Non-teaching) | 62 |
| 5. General Studies | 39 |

The average semester hour load for all of the nontraditional students was 9.03. This compares with an average undergraduate load for all students of 13.1 hours. Only 40.1 percent of the nontraditional students were enrolled for a full-time load of twelve hours or more.

Seven hundred eighty-two, or 45 percent, of the students had transferred hours to UNI. The average number of hours transferred was thirty-eight. This is somewhat higher than the estimated one-third of the total undergraduate population that transfers hours into the university.

ACT, High School Graduating Class Rank and
Grade Point Averages

Two characteristics which are commonly used to judge the quality of a student body are ACT results and high school rank. Of the 1,719 students in the nontraditional category at UNI, the ACT composite score was available for 583. For these 583, the mean was 20.774. A typical freshman class entering UNI directly from high school has over one-half of its students with an ACT composite of 21 or higher. This does not consider the ACT scores of transfer students, however, which most likely are lower than for those entering directly from high school. Thus the ACT results of nontraditional students that are reported seem close to the university average. However, it must be remembered that these results are for fewer than one-third

of the nontraditional students.

The high school rank was available for 453 of the 1,719 students in question. Of these, the mean high school rank was 112 out of a mean high school graduating class size of 243. Thus, of the approximately one-third of the nontraditional students for whom the data is available, the average person is near the bottom of the top one-half of his/her respective class. Considering that two-thirds of UNI's entering freshmen are in the top 40 percent of their respective graduating classes, it would appear that nontraditional students perhaps average a bit lower in terms of high school rank than traditional-aged students. Again, it must be remembered that we are dealing with only 453, or about one-fourth, of the nontraditional students so it is difficult to attach very much significance to these statistics.

The mean grade point of the nontraditional students was 2.80. This compares with a mean for all undergraduates at this time of 2.76. In terms of academic performance, nontraditional students seem to do equally as well as traditional students.

Employment, Income and Housing Status

As Table 5 illustrates, 62.9 percent of the respondents reported that they were working either part- or full-time with 30.9 percent working full-time. The crosstabulations showed that 39.6 percent of the men were working full-time

Table 6
Occupations of the Respondents Who are Employed

Occupation	f	Percent	
		Relative	Adjusted
Exec-Admin-Management	23	5.7	9.4
Professional Special	57	14.1	23.4
Technical	19	4.7	7.8
Sales	15	3.7	6.1
Admin Support-Clerical	55	13.6	22.5
Private Household	3	0.7	1.2
Protective Services	8	2.0	3.3
Service	28	6.9	11.5
Farm-Forest-Fish	3	0.7	1.2
Mechanics-Repair	3	0.7	1.2
Construction TRD	13	3.2	5.3
Precision Products	4	1.0	1.6
Machine OP-Assembler	9	2.2	3.7
Trans-Moving	2	0.5	0.8
Hand-Clean-Help-LBR	2	0.5	0.8
Not Able to Code	4	1.0	N/A
No Data	6	1.5	N/A
Not Applicable	<u>150</u>	<u>37.1</u>	<u>N/A</u>
Total	404	100.0	100.0

more hours than those who had blue collar jobs.

The household income levels of the respondents covered the entire spectrum from under \$5,000 to over \$40,000. The median is slightly under \$20,000. Though the largest single group (19.5 percent) is less than \$5,000, income is divided relatively equally throughout the other categories. It is suspected that many of those in this lowest income level would be those who are not married and not employed. The higher the income the less likely a respondent was to be enrolled in twelve or more hours. Of those earning less than \$10,000, 47.3 percent were enrolled for twelve or more hours while only 11.5 percent of those earning \$30,000 or more were enrolled for twelve or more hours. Married respondents had significantly higher incomes than did single respondents, and parents had higher incomes than non-parents.

Three hundred eighty-two of the respondents, or 94.8 percent, lived off campus. Twenty-one, or 5.2 percent, lived on campus and no data was reported for one respondent.

Of those responding, 52.7 percent reported that they owned their own homes, while 35.6 percent rented and 5.9 percent reported rent-free living. This data was not supplied by 5.7 percent. The relatively high level of home ownership corresponds closely with the number of students reporting an annual household income of \$15,000 and above (Table 7).

Table 7
Household Income of the Respondents

Household Income	f	Percent Relative	Adjusted
Less than \$5,000	78	19.3	19.5
\$5,000 - \$9,999	46	11.4	11.5
\$10,000 - \$14,999	42	10.4	10.5
\$15,000 - \$19,999	46	11.4	11.5
\$20,000 - \$24,999	47	11.6	11.8
\$25,000 - \$29,999	38	9.4	9.5
\$30,000 - \$39,999	54	13.4	13.5
\$40,000 or More	48	11.9	12.0
No Data	<u>5</u>	<u>1.2</u>	<u>N/A</u>
Total	404	100.0	100.0

When Respondents First Attended College

In seeking to further refine the nontraditional students' profile, their behavior immediately upon leaving high school was examined. It was found that, of the 404 respondents, 170, or 42.1 percent, had started college immediately upon completing high school, while 233, or 57.7 percent, had not started immediately. White collar workers were more likely to have started college immediately after high school than were blue collar workers by a 48.2 to 34.7 percentage.

Table 8 illustrates the reasons why many chose not to begin college immediately after completing high school. Gaining employment, not being able to afford college and marriage are the reasons mentioned by at least 30 percent. Four times as many women indicated marriage as the reason that they didn't begin college right away than did men.

Table 8

Respondents' Reasons for not Starting College
Immediately After High School
(Multiple Response Table)

Reason (N=224)	f	Percent of	
		Responses	Cases
Got Married	68	12.9	30.4
Gained Employment	86	16.3	38.4
Joined or Drafted into Armed Services	36	6.8	16.1
Could not Afford to Start College	83	15.7	37.1
Saw no Need to Continue Education	65	12.3	29.0
Felt I Would not Like College	40	7.6	17.9
Did not Feel Confident Enough	53	10.0	23.7
Did not Feel Academically Prepared	36	6.8	16.1
Family Matters	20	3.8	8.9
Other Varied Answers	<u>42</u>	<u>7.9</u>	<u>18.8</u>
Totals	529	100.0	236.2

Of the respondents who gave an answer classified under "other," the most common response given for not starting college immediately after high school was that the student had gone on to a trade or technical school. Several others mentioned that they had gone to nursing school. Others mentioned that they were not yet ready or interested, and four mentioned that they didn't graduate from high school until later.

Over one-half of the respondents, 219 or 54.2 percent, selected UNI as their first college to attend while 185, 45.8 percent, indicated that they had attended college previously. As illustrated in Table 9, 60.3 percent of those who had attended another college had only attended one other college with the average number of other colleges attended being 1.54.

Table 10 illustrates why the respondents left earlier colleges. The greatest response to this question came in answer to the "other" option. Of the eighty-two open-ended responses, forty-five said that the reason they had left the first college was because they had graduated or completed the program. Most of these students had completed a two-year community college or vocational program. Many had completed an Associate of Arts degree. Most likely some of those who checked the transfer response were coming from community colleges also.

Table 9
Number of Colleges Attended in Addition to UNI

Number	f	Percent	
		Relative	Adjusted
One	105	26.0	60.3
Two	51	12.6	29.3
Three	13	3.2	7.5
Four	4	1.0	2.3
Five	1	0.2	0.6
No Data	11	2.7	N/A
Not Applicable	<u>219</u>	<u>54.2</u>	<u>N/A</u>
Totals	404	100.0	100.0
Mean = 1.540; Median = 1.329; Std. Dev. = 0.809			

Table 10
Reasons for Leaving the First College Attended
(Multiple Response Table)

Reason (N=128)	f	Percent of	
		Responses	Cases
Financial	31	11.5	24.2
Marriage	38	14.1	29.7
Employment	36	13.3	28.1
Transfer to Better College	37	13.7	28.9
Personal Matters	29	10.7	22.7
Family Matters	9	3.3	7.0
Poor Academic Standing	8	3.0	6.3
Other Varied Answers	<u>82</u>	<u>30.4</u>	<u>64.1</u>
Totals	270	100.0	211.0

Marriage, finances and employment also ranked as three prominent reasons why people had left their first college. These three were also common reasons why respondents had chosen not to start college immediately after high school. Women were five times more likely than men to have left their first college because of marriage.

Some other of the open-ended responses concerned leaving an earlier college because of a geographic move usually related to a job transfer or a change in military assignment.

Reasons for Attending College

Three common reasons given by respondents for attending college centered around careers, career advancement, career change and salary increase (Table 11). Of the fifty-six other varied open-ended responses, twenty-four were work- or career-related responses also. The vast majority of the respondents (Table 12) wished to get into an occupation classified as either professional (49.3 percent or executive, administrative or managerial (29.4 percent).

Table 11

Respondents' Reasons for Attending College
(Multiple Response Table)

Reason (N=396)	f	Percent of	
		Responses	Cases
Career Advancement	243	23.7	61.4
Career Change	179	17.5	45.2
Salary Increase	141	13.8	35.6
Personal Growth and Development	284	27.7	71.7
A Way to Meet People	46	4.5	11.6
Prestige/Status	52	5.1	13.1
Extra Time to Fill	23	2.2	5.8
Other Varied Answers	<u>56</u>	<u>5.5</u>	<u>14.1</u>
Totals	1024	100.0	244.4

Table 12
Occupations that Respondents Hoped to Obtain Upon
College Completion

Occupations	f	Percent	
		Relative	Adjusted
Exec-Admin-Manag	108	26.7	29.4
Professional Special	181	44.8	49.3
Technical	20	5.0	5.4
Sales	3	0.7	0.8
Admin Support-Cler	13	3.2	3.5
Private Household	1	0.2	0.3
Protective Service	5	1.2	1.4
Service	4	1.0	1.1
Farm-Forest-Fish	1	0.2	0.3
Mechanics-Repair	1	0.2	0.3
Construction TRD	2	0.5	0.5
Trans-Moving	1	0.2	0.3
Undecided	27	6.7	7.4
Not Able to Code	8	2.0	N/A
No Data	29	7.2	N/A
Totals	404	100.0	100.0

Financing College

In terms of financing college, the data in Table 13 show that an extremely high percentage of nontraditional students are paying their own way through college, wholly or

in part. Few of the respondents, 8.5 percent, indicated that they were still getting help from their parents. In addition to relying on their own funds, a very significant number, 38.6 percent, get some type of financial aid and another 11.7 percent receive some funds through a private loan. Also, a significant number, 17.7 percent, took advantage of an employer-paid arrangement. Of this group which receives assistance from employers, there were more males than females, most were part-time students, most were working full-time, most were in white collar jobs, and over one-half had household incomes of over \$30,000.

Table 13
How Respondents Finance Their Education
(Multiple Response Table)

Sources of Finance	f	Percent of	
		Responses	Cases
Own Money	292	44.2	72.6
Help From Parents	34	5.2	8.5
Scholarship	22	3.3	5.5
Financial Aid	155	23.5	38.6
Private Loan	47	7.1	11.7
G.I. Bill-Veap	39	5.9	9.7
Paid by Employer	<u>71</u>	<u>10.8</u>	<u>17.7</u>
Totals	660	100.0	164.2

Use of Campus Services and Events

Table 14 illustrates the frequency with which nontraditional students used some of the campus services available to them. Fully one-third of the students had used the Counseling Center and slightly over one-third of these students had used the Learning Skills Center.

Table 14
Use of Campus Services
(Multiple Response Table)

Campus Service (N=360)	f	Percent of Responses	Cases
Admissions Office	308	43.1	85.6
Counseling Center	125	17.5	34.7
Child Care Center	12	1.7	3.3
Culture Center	14	2.0	3.9
Support Group	17	2.4	4.7
Learning Skills Center	91	12.7	25.3
Student Advising Center	80	11.2	22.2
Placement Office	<u>67</u>	<u>9.4</u>	<u>18.6</u>
Totals	714	100.0	198.3

The issue of the use of campus services will be discussed again later when the responses to question number twenty-three are discussed.

The answers to question number eight concerning

attendance at UNI campus events is very revealing. As Table 15 shows, on the average the respondents attended each of the campus events fewer than one time each. The data show that about three-fourths of the respondents did not attend one campus event over the twelve-month period. This information shows these students to be rather one-dimensional in their use of campus opportunities.

Table 15
Number of Times Respondents Attended Campus Events

Campus Event	Mean	Median
Athletic Events	0.333	0.250
Drama/Plays/Films	0.303	0.217
Musical Events/Concerts	0.249	0.166
Guest Speakers	0.402	0.335
Art Gallery Exhibitions	0.253	0.169
Social Events/Parties	0.099	0.055
Student Organizations/Clubs	0.169	0.102
Departmental Activities	0.175	0.106

In-Class Behavior and Relationships with
Instructors and Other Students

Several questions were asked in order to determine whether there were any differences between nontraditional and traditional students concerning in-class behavior and relationships with instructors.

Table 16 illustrates that nontraditional students feel strongly that they respond in class more frequently than others. While 48 percent felt that they spoke out more often, only 12.6 percent felt that they spoke out less often. There was a significant relationship (chi square significance .05) between being married and speaking out in class. Married people were more likely to speak out. Table 17 shows that nontraditional students feel strongly that their age and experience do cause them to have more to contribute than their younger counterparts; 72.8 percent felt this way.

Table 16

How Often do You Speak in Class Compared to
Other Students?

Response	f	Percent	
		Relative	Adjusted
More Often	194	48.0	48.0
About the Same	159	39.4	39.4
Less Often	<u>51</u>	<u>12.6</u>	<u>12.6</u>
Totals	404	100.0	100.0

Table 17

Do You Feel That You have More to Offer in Class Because
of Your Experience?

Response	f	Percent	
		Relative	Adjusted
Yes	287	71.0	72.8
No	107	26.5	27.2
No Data	<u>10</u>	<u>2.5</u>	<u>N/A</u>
Totals	404	100.0	100.0

However, as illustrated in Table 18, two-thirds of the nontraditional respondents felt that instructors were no more likely to call on them than they were the younger students. Thus, the fact that nontraditional students speak out more than traditional age students is a result of their own volition rather than because they are solicited to do so.

Table 18

Do Instructors Call on You More Often than Younger Students?

Response	f	Percent	
		Relative	Adjusted
Yes	132	32.7	33.5
No	262	64.9	66.5
Spoiled Response	4	1.0	N/A
No Data	<u>6</u>	<u>1.5</u>	<u>N/A</u>
Totals	404	100.0	100.0

Nontraditional students felt that they had more to say to instructors outside of the classroom also. Table 19 illustrates that 29.9 percent of the nontraditional students felt that they visited with instructors more often outside of class than did their traditional counterparts while only 9.2 percent felt that they visited less than others. As illustrated in Table 20, most of the students did not feel the instructors were intimidated by their being in class. Of those that did, significantly more (chi square significance .05) were males, juniors and seniors and blue collar workers.

Table 19

Do You Think You Visit More Often or Less Often with
Instructors Outside of Class?

Response	f	Percent	
		Relative	Adjusted
More Often	120	29.7	29.9
Less Often	37	9.2	9.2
About the Same	129	31.9	32.2
Not Sure	76	18.8	19.0
Do Not Visit	39	9.7	9.7
Spoiled Response	2	0.5	N/A
No Data	<u>1</u>	<u>0.2</u>	<u>N/A</u>
Totals	404	100.0	100.0

Table 20

Do You Feel that Instructors are Intimidated by You?

Response	f	Percent	
		Relative	Adjusted
Yes	49	12.1	12.2
No	313	77.5	78.1
Not Sure	39	9.7	9.7
Spoiled Response	1	0.2	N/A
No Data	<u>2</u>	<u>0.5</u>	<u>N/A</u>
Totals	404	100.0	100.0

A very high percentage of the respondents (60.3 percent) felt very comfortable in their relationships with the younger students. The crosstabulations showed a tendency for white collar workers to be more comfortable with the younger students than blue collar workers. Less than one-fourth (23.1 percent) indicated that they felt out of place or somewhat uncomfortable with the younger students (Table 21).

Table 21

Nontraditional Students' Feelings Toward Younger Students

Feelings	f	Percent	
		Relative	Adjusted
Out-of-Place	21	5.2	5.3
Somewhat Uncomfortable	71	17.6	17.8
Very Comfortable	240	59.4	60.3
More Respected	66	16.3	16.6
No Data	6	1.5	N/A
Totals	404	100.0	100.0

Where and When Nontraditional Students Study

Most nontraditional students, 81.3 percent of the respondents, indicated that they did most of their studying at home (Table 22). Previous responses have indicated that nontraditional students do not use other campus services very frequently nor do they attend campus social and

athletic events, consequently one would not expect them to do most of their studying on campus.

Of the students who wrote a response under "other," six of the thirteen said that they studied in the public library, three mentioned at work, and one mentioned in the parking lot before classes and before work.

Table 22
Where Nontraditional Students Study

Location	f	Percent Relative	Adjusted
Residence	291	72.0	81.3
Library	39	9.7	10.9
Union	1	0.2	0.3
UNI-other	14	3.5	3.9
Other	13	3.2	3.6
Spoiled Response	<u>46</u>	<u>11.4</u>	<u>N/A</u>
Totals	404	100.0	100.0

When asked when they study, 185, or 56.2 percent of the usable responses, indicated that they studied at home in the evenings (Table 23). The next highest response was the 14.9 percent that indicated they studied at home during the day, perhaps because they either do not work at all, or because they work at night. Only 7.9 percent indicated weekends as their primary study time. However, it may simply mean that

many study on weekends in addition to their evening time, or, considering the options given as answers, respondents who checked evenings at home could also mean weekends.

The most common response listed under the "other" category concerned studying around work schedules. Several students indicated that they were able to study at work or during their lunch breaks at work.

Table 23
When Nontraditional Students Study

Study Times	f	Percent	
		Relative	Adjusted
Day-Home	49	12.1	14.9
Day-Campus	25	6.2	7.6
Weekends	26	6.4	7.9
Evening-Home	185	45.8	56.2
Evening-Campus	21	5.2	6.4
Other	23	5.7	7.0
Spoiled Response	<u>75</u>	<u>18.6</u>	<u>N/A</u>
Totals	404	100.0	100.0

Personal Feelings About Entering UNI

The respondents to this survey indicated that returning to college can be an anxiety-producing activity for a nontraditional student. An examination of Table 24 indicates that over one-half of the respondents felt a

general feeling of anxiety about entering UNI. Also, a majority indicated some concern about their study habits and grades.

Table 24

Concerns or Feelings of Nontraditional Students When
They First Attended UNI

Concerns and Feelings (N=369)	f	Percent of	
		Responses	Cases
Not Getting Good Grades	194	23.7	52.6
Felt Out-of-Place	115	14.0	31.2
Felt Intimidated by College Environment	78	9.5	21.1
Concerned About Study Habits	228	27.8	61.8
General Feeling of Anxiety	<u>205</u>	<u>25.0</u>	<u>55.6</u>
Total Responses	820	100.0	222.2

The crosstabulations showed that women were more likely to be intimidated by the college environment than were men; 24.8 percent of the women expressed a concern compared to 15.6 percent of the men.

When concerns and feelings were crosstabulated with age, it was found that a higher percentage of those age forty-five or older felt a general feeling of anxiety than those in either the twenty-five to thirty-four age group or the thirty-five to forty-four age group. However, the older group was the least concerned of the three groups about not

getting good grades.

By a margin of 72.1 percent to 54.9 percent, freshmen and sophomores were more concerned about their study habits than juniors and seniors. This may be attributed to the fact that the juniors and seniors had already experienced some success in college.

For four of the five categories, the levels of concern were higher for students taking twelve or more hours. There was no difference in anxiety levels between married and single students, however, blue collar workers showed higher levels of anxiety/concern in all five categories, and those not employed showed higher levels in four of the five categories. The data indicated that those employed, especially those in white collar jobs, were more likely to feel comfortable in the college environment.

Effects of College Attendance on Feelings About Self

There can be little doubt that college attendance has a very positive effect on the self-esteem of nontraditional students. As Table 25 shows, 75.4 percent of the respondents indicated that they were more self-confident as a result of college attendance.

Table 25
Effects of College Attendance on Feelings About Self

Effect (N=391)	f	Percent of	
		Responses	Cases
Helped me to be more Self-Confident	295	42.4	75.4
Helped me Feel More in Control	196	28.2	50.1
Made me More Aware of Inadequacies	136	19.6	34.8
Other	<u>68</u>	<u>9.8</u>	<u>17.4</u>
Total Responses	695	100.0	177.7

In addition, thirty-seven of those who gave an answer under "other" gave an answer that indicated increased self-esteem and personal growth. The following are some of the responses to question eighteen concerning the effects of college attendance:

- Has taught me self-discipline and how to organize time.
- Has given me a sense of accomplishment--like I'm finally doing something.
- Satisfaction of realizing a dream.
- Feel good about accomplishing goal.
- Has increased my expectations of myself.
- I feel as though I'm doing something productive.
- I'm happier because I have wanted to continue my education for twenty-seven years.

- College has given me a direction and a purpose in life.
- Has helped me realize some potential I had not been aware of in recent years.
- I'm more intelligent than I thought I was.

Some of the responses under the "other" category were quite revealing in terms of the dilemmas faced by some nontraditional students. For example, one respondent wrote that, "College has made me question whether it's worth \$10,000 to make less money than I did three years ago in a factory." Another mentioned that college attendance "has required me to budget my time between work, family and school." Still another student mentioned "added stress."

As Table 25 shows, one-half of the students felt that college attendance had helped them to feel more in control while slightly over one-third indicated that they were made more aware of their inadequacies. One interesting revelation of the crosstabulations for this question was that while only 24.5 percent of the white collar workers mentioned that they were made more aware of their inadequacies, 42.7 percent of blue collar workers indicated that they had become more aware of inadequacies.

Overall, the results of this study confirm that college attendance has a very healthy influence upon the lives of the nontraditional students. While their primary goal for going to college may be economic, the psychological side effects seem to begin early and are undoubtedly equally as

important as later financial/career rewards.

Effects of College Attendance Upon Relationships
With Spouse or Others You Live with and Friends

When a person aged twenty-five or older decides to attend college it can have a profound effect on the others who share the household, especially a spouse and children. This study revealed both positive and negative effects. The responses checked by all of the respondents are shown in Table 26.

Table 26

Effects of College Attendance on Relationship with
Spouse or Living Partner(s)

Number	f	Percent of Responses	Cases	Married Respondents
Grown Closer Together	106	22.6	27.5	32.9
Growing Apart	37	7.9	9.6	8.1
Not Spending Enough Time Together	120	25.6	31.2	37.2
Has Had no Effect	127	27.1	33.0	29.9
Other	<u>78</u>	<u>16.7</u>	<u>20.3</u>	<u>16.2</u>
Total Responses	468	100.0	121.6	124.3

The crosstabulation that separated out the responses of the married people showed that four times as many respondents indicated that they had grown closer together than said that they were growing apart. However, 37.2

percent did indicate that they were not spending enough time together.

Combining those who indicated there was no effect with those who felt they had grown closer together results in 62.8 percent of the respondents indicating that college has not had a detrimental effect on their marriages.

Other data from this question were revealed in the seventy-eight "other" responses. While twenty-seven of these responses indicated that college attendance had caused problems in their marriage and even divorce, twenty-six indicated a greater mutual respect and sense of pride had resulted. Some typical responses of those indicating marriage problems were:

- Spouse feels threatened.
- Family resents attendance and changes involved.
- My husband seems to resent my effort to improve myself.
- Outgrew spouse.
- My marriage ended in divorce. The more confident and assertive I became the more it seemed to attack our marriage.
- Lead to my divorce.

Responses given by those who indicated that college attendance had caused greater mutual respect included the following:

- Spouse seems to have more respect.
- Without my family's support and understanding, I don't think I could have come this far.

- There seems to be more mutual respect.
- More interests to talk about.
- My children now see me as a mother and a person.
- He feels prouder of me than before as just a housewife.

Respondents were also asked to comment on the effect that college attendance had on their relationships with friends. Table 27 indicates that 65 percent of the respondents found that college attendance had not affected their friendships negatively while only 26 percent felt that they had grown apart from their old friends.

Table 27

Effects of College Attendance on Relationships with Friends
(Multiple Response Table)

Effect (N=402)	f	Percent of	
		Responses	Cases
Grown Apart	52	11.1	12.9
Grown Apart - Made New Friends	52	11.1	12.9
Not Grown Apart - Made New Friends	162	34.6	40.3
Has Had No Effect	140	29.9	34.8
Other	<u>62</u>	<u>13.2</u>	<u>15.4</u>
Total Responses	468	100.0	116.4

The crosstabulation that compared the relationships with friends with the number of hours enrolled in showed full-time students (twelve hours or more) had their friendships affected more than did part-time students. For example, while 43.2 percent of the part-time students indicated that college attendance had no effect on their friendships, only 20.5 percent of the full-time students indicated this.

The responses given under "other" were very revealing. Twenty-eight respondents indicated that their biggest problem concerning friends was that they had less time for friends. One student commented, "I do have much less time to socialize." Another said, "I don't have enough time available to visit my friends. They are still friends, I just rarely see them." Again the point was made that the schedules of nontraditional students were very busy as many of them split their attention among job, family and college.

Several of the students mentioned increased status among friends because of college attendance. One commented that, "My non-college friends are more inclined to ask my advice on certain subjects due to the type of degree I'm acquiring." Another said, "My friends went to college so now we have more in common."

Others mentioned that some of their friends seemed to resent their college status. Several respondents felt alienated from old friends and one commented that he now

"wanted more out of a conversation than they offer."

The Most Desirable Times to Attend Class

Typically undergraduate, on-campus students prefer to take the majority of their classes in the mornings on week days. Professors have also preferred to teach at this time; consequently, mornings are usually relatively busy on campus with the activity tapering off in the afternoons with Friday afternoon being a very quiet time on campuses in terms of classes.

Nontraditional students are not usually expected to have this same preference for morning classes because of family and work schedules. There could be a strong case made that the evenings and Saturdays would score highly as the preferred times for classes. This did not turn out to be the case in this study, however. As Table 28 indicates, the overwhelming first choice given as the most desirable time to attend classes was the morning. Although evenings were the first choice of 101 respondents, this was less than one-half of the 237 who listed mornings. In addition, Saturdays were not considered strongly at all as a time for classes with 249 listing it as their last choice.

Table 28
Most Desirable Times to Attend Classes

Choice	Mornings	Afternoons	Evenings	Saturdays
First	237	50	101	10
Second	51	218	60	57
Third	41	72	184	45
Fourth	39	24	30	249

Extent of Satisfaction with College

Overall the respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their college experience. As Table 29 shows, over 30 percent of the respondents indicated satisfaction with the experience with almost one-half, 48.4 percent, being very satisfied. Much more insight into this question is given by the responses to question number twenty-three on the questionnaire in which respondents discussed their college experience in response to an open-ended question.

The crosstabulation for this question showed females to be slightly more satisfied with their college experience than were the male respondents. There does not seem to be an obvious reason why this should be so.

Table 29
 Respondents' Extent of Satisfaction with College

Extent of Satisfaction	f	Percent	
		Relative	Adjusted
Very Satisfied	192	47.5	48.4
Somewhat Satisfied	166	41.1	41.8
Somewhat Dissatisfied	31	7.7	7.8
Very Dissatisfied	8	2.0	2.0
Spoiled Response	4	1.0	N/A
No Data	<u>3</u>	<u>0.7</u>	<u>N/A</u>
Totals	404	100.0	100.0

What UNI Could do to Enhance the Respondents' College
 Experience and Make it More Convenient,
 Enjoyable and Profitable

The responses to this open-ended question were categorized with the results listed in Table 30. Since there were 404 respondents and 394 responses, it was apparent that most of the respondents felt strongly enough about a particular item to take the time to list it. It must be kept in mind, however, that the majority of the nontraditional students had already indicated a high level of satisfaction with their college experience; thus, in most cases, these comments cannot be construed as a severe criticism of the university, but rather as something that would enhance what was already considered a positive

Table 30
 Suggestions for the University from Nontraditional
 Students

Suggestion	f
Expanding Evening-Saturday Class Schedule	62
Everything Fine--It is a Positive Experience	26
Comments on the Quality of Instructors	21
Better Class Availability	20
Instruction Needs to be More Flexible	19
Improve Registration/Scheduling Procedures	17
Improve Parking	16
Better Publicity of Campus Activities and Organizations	15
More and Better Advising	13
More Financial Aid	13
Lower Tuition	11
More Support Groups for Nontraditional Students	11
Orientation Program for Nontraditional Students	10
Other Varied Answers	<u>140</u>
Total	394

experience. In the following paragraphs each of the categories of responses are briefly discussed with several examples of the responses given.

The most frequently listed response concerned the availability of evening and Saturday classes. An earlier question revealed that evening classes were the first choice of over one hundred of the respondents. Apparently many felt strongly enough about this issue to comment on it again.

The following are some of the comments respondents made concerning this issue.

- More night classes would be helpful. Condensed, short term summer classes are great.
- Offer more classes at night. Sometimes it is difficult to get the classes I need. UNI encourages older students to continue their education, but often doesn't offer classes.
- In my situation, numerous schedule changes occurred because of shift changes forced upon me by my employer.
- More "core" classes offered in the evenings. I had to wait two and one-half years to take a class required in my major.
- I can't seem to finish my education because the courses required for me are only held during the day when I work and not during the evenings or by correspondence.
- Because I work full-time, I find it necessary to attend only evening classes. I have been told that the major course requirements in my major field will never be offered at night. This makes me doubt UNI's interest in the graduation of part-time students.
- I will eventually run out of classes I can take in the evenings or by correspondence and then I will

either have to make arrangements with my employer for time off to attend classes or quite college.

- Make more of an effort to realize that many people have to work full-time, have families, etc., and that making more classes available at night or weekends would help.

The second greatest response came from those who felt that everything was fine. One commented, "It has been great just the way it is. It would be better only if I would not have to commute about two and one-half hours a day." This gave another example of the type of sacrifices that nontraditional students made.

A second student felt really good about herself and the entire experience. "My experience has been so positive. For myself, at my age, I don't think there is anything else I could have done that would have been so stimulating or satisfying."

Several respondents commented, "I'm completely happy with my experience at UNI."

These comments serve to reaffirm earlier responses that there is a high level of satisfaction on the part of nontraditional students at UNI.

Twenty-one of the respondents commented about the quality of instruction. Several commented that they had had poor instructors and were upset because there was no way to evaluate them without the fear of reprisal. It was mentioned that they were not able to evaluate older, tenured faculty members, some of whom needed the evaluation the

most.

Several respondents commented that instructors did not make their instruction relevant to the real world. Still others were upset about the emphasis put upon research and not teaching, and some specifically mentioned having received poor quality instruction from a doctoral student whose "priority was the dissertation," and from adjunct instructors.

As well as the quality of instruction, nontraditional students also commented that instructors needed to be more flexible with them. Almost all of the nineteen students who mentioned this felt that instructors did not empathize with situations like a child in the hospital, job-related duties, commuting distance and time, and single parenting. They were also critical of attendance policies that penalized them when one of the above-listed situations impinged upon them. One student responded, "Have had a few instructors insensitive towards me and my situation; a child in the hospital makes no difference." Another student replied, "I feel some of the instructors could be more flexible with work conflicts. I have had to miss an occasional class because of my job. One instructor refused to let me reschedule a test when I had to attend an out-of-town conference." Still another student responded bitterly, "Most faculty and personnel appear that the students are here for them instead of the college being here for the

students."

Several suggestions were made concerning class availability. Most of these comments concerned classes being filled and not being available at the particular time that the student would have preferred. One student suggested having courses be available during the daytime in three-hour blocks so that fewer trips to campus would be necessary. Another suggested that more of the classes in his major be offered back-to-back so that he could take more than one class per trip.

Some of the nontraditional students reported a need for improvement in the registration and scheduling procedures. Because of their time constraints, getting registered during certain hours can pose all sorts of problems. As one student put it, "It seems that one cannot sign up for any class without two or three signatures from two or three different people with different office hours on opposite sides of campus. It's a circus!" Another commented, "I have been commuting from Mason City, so many of the registration requirements were extremely inconvenient. Having to register in person at a certain time was a pain. I would think that long distance commuters could register, make schedule changes, etc., over the phone."

Sixteen respondents mentioned that parking needed to be improved. There was a feeling among fifteen of the respondents that better publicity was needed for campus

activities and organizations. Because they did not spend much time on campus, they were not likely to learn about activities through some of the traditional avenues such as posters in the dormitories. Though the school paper, the Northern Iowan, usually contained references to what was happening on campus, several students complained that events were not publicized far enough in advance to allow sufficient time to make arrangements to attend. Several students indicated they would be involved more on campus if they knew more about what was going on. Two students suggested that there be a monthly newsletter sent to off-campus students in order to keep them posted of on-campus events.

The quality of the advising was a concern for thirteen of the respondents. Several students complained that student advising was not available in the evening. One student commented, "I've got to have help planning as I cannot afford the time nor the money for a class that is not necessary. . ." Another student said, "I figure I am spending one whole year longer in school because of inadequate advisors."

Some students complained about a lack of financial aid and others felt that the tuition should be lowered.

Several students indicated an interest in support groups for older students and for single-parent families. One student commented, "I'd like to get to know more older

students. I think they offer support."

In a similar vein, ten students requested an orientation session for older students. This could be very helpful because of their many unique circumstances.

Beyond the above-listed comments, there were an additional 140 varied answers given by the nontraditional students. These comments covered a wide variety of topics. A few requested child care facilities and several others complained about the general education program. Some students wanted to be able to get credit for life experiences. Several others felt that it would be helpful if they could be tested in certain areas, like mathematics, so that they would know at which level they should begin taking courses. These students felt unsure of their skills because of their long absence from an educational environment. Additional comments given by the respondents are listed in the Appendix.

This concludes Chapter Four which has revealed the findings of this study. Chapter Five provides a summary, analysis and conclusions.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Analysis and Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter is to briefly summarize and analyze the findings of this study concerning nontraditional students at UNI and to examine any conclusions that could be drawn. Because most of the data presented in Chapter Four was depicted in a straightforward manner, it will not be presented again here in greater detail, but only in broad generalities and patterns.

The study found that the mean age of the nontraditional students at UNI was thirty-two, or about ten years older than traditional students. If one accepts the assumption that people are always learning something as they go through life, this ten-year age difference should serve to the advantage of the nontraditional student in terms of having more of an experiential background for many courses.

Approximately 59 percent of the nontraditional students were married, and the same percentage were parents. The results of the questionnaire indicated that because of marriage and being parents, most nontraditional students have greater demands upon their time than do traditional students. This could also serve to explain, at least in

part, why nontraditional students carry an average course load of only nine hours. This is not surprising in view of their other responsibilities.

It is worth noting that the top four majors declared by nontraditional students, especially accounting and computer science, are quite occupation specific. This would indicate that this group of students is looking to college as a training ground for an occupation. Understandably, nontraditional students are more "pocketbook" oriented than younger students for whom the reality of household and family expenses has not yet manifested itself as clearly.

Not surprisingly, the percentage of nontraditional students who transferred hours into UNI was greater than for traditional students. This is expected because of the greater likelihood of geographic moves in their lives related to marriage, jobs, the military and so forth.

The ACT scores and the high school ranks of the respondents for whom they were available were just slightly below the median for incoming freshmen at UNI. However, the mean grade point of nontraditional students was about the same as that of traditional students. Perhaps this illustrates that while nontraditional students were more likely to be married, have children and be employed, they also were perhaps more highly motivated and have better study habits than those who are younger. They also may not have as many distractions from their peers as did

traditional-aged students living in dorms.

About one-third of the nontraditional students were employed full-time and another one-third were employed part-time. This statistic was expected in view of the age, family and marital status of nontraditional students. They were less likely to receive parental support and consequently, worked in order to pay their way. Interestingly, white collar workers were more likely to be enrolled in more hours than blue collar workers. Perhaps this was due to the fact that they were more career oriented and felt that the degree would help them more quickly, or, possibly, their jobs allowed them more freedom in scheduling.

The median household income level of the respondents was slightly less than \$20,000; however, the income levels covered the entire range from under \$5,000 to over \$40,000. At the upper end, with income over \$30,000, many students were found to be married and have a spouse who was earning a good income. In most cases the nontraditional student was a woman returning to get a degree while her husband was already in a relatively stable, well-paying occupation. This was most likely to happen after the children had reached school age. The middle income levels reflected a wide range of possibilities including part- or full-time work on the part of the student as well as the possibility of a working spouse.

Only 5 percent of the respondents lived on campus. This figure was not surprising; it would not be expected that many unmarried students age twenty-five or older would want to live in dormitories. They would likely feel out of place among the younger crowd and, also, they would not have the independence that they would likely prefer.

Somewhat surprisingly, over one-half of the respondents indicated they owned their homes. It also appeared that there was a relatively stable life style to be found among these students. Relatively average income and home ownership levels indicated that a majority of UNI's nontraditional students were stable residents who may have been in the geographic area for some time and were not looking to leave but rather to improve their situation while they remained in the area. While some of these students may have moved to the area in order to have access to the university, this did not appear to be the case with the majority.

Employment, being unable to afford college, and marriage were the three most common reasons given by the 52.7 percent of the respondents who did not begin college immediately after high school. It appeared that the top two reasons were used by many who, once they got a job after high school, were reluctant to quit the job and go back to the life of "poverty" of a full-time student. Gaining employment usually meant money for automobiles, clothes and

a social life not affordable by students. One of the dangers present when students said they were going to "work a year" before starting college was that they got used to a life style they did not want to give up and, consequently, never did go to college. some of these people are reluctant to practice "delayed gratification." This was true also of people who chose to get married at this early date.

While many said they could not afford college, this is seldom really the case with the availability of loans and other forms of tuition aid. Many would likely mention this reason, however, because it is more socially acceptable than some of the real reasons that perhaps caused them not to attend.

A small number of the respondents indicated that they did not begin college immediately because they had gone to trade or technical school. Obviously, later in their careers this group felt a need to obtain a college degree in addition to their technical training. This situation is commonly encountered by the blue collar worker trying for a promotion into a white collar position that requires a college degree.

The composite of these responses indicated that many nontraditional students were people who had not planned on college throughout high school and for whom the value of higher education had not been instilled as a value by their families. Likely no parent, school counselor or teacher,

sibling had ever told these people that they were bright enough and could afford college if they were willing to sacrifice. Later in life, after being jolted by the realities of the job market, or after further maturation, they proceeded to select college on their own.

Not surprisingly, career-oriented responses ranked very high as the reason why respondents chose to attend college, however, a bit surprising was the large number of respondents who checked personal growth and development. Perhaps many of the 71.7 percent of the respondents who checked this response did so because they felt career changes and personal growth go together. At any rate, just by its very nature, college education should contribute to personal growth and development. The other varied responses included comments like, "I always wanted to go to college but it never fit into the budget before," "I needed to make my mind think again," and several mentioned how they enjoyed the learning experience.

Most of the respondents wished to get into an occupation classified as either professional, executive, administrative or managerial. The relatively low level of respondents undecided about a preferred occupation seemed to lend credence to the idea that nontraditional students know where they wish to go and what they want their education to do for them. Unlike many traditional-aged students, few nontraditional students look to college attendance as

something to do to pass several years of their youth. They know what they want and are going after it. The years of other experiences have solidified their ideas of what they want out of college.

Most nontraditional students financed their own way through college. This was expected in that parents do not typically help sons and daughters who are over age twenty-five, feeling that they should be able to care for themselves, and, secondly, many of these students had indicated earlier that they could not afford college right out of high school, leading one to conclude that most of these nontraditional students did not come from affluent families.

Many nontraditional students also made use of financial aid programs and a significant number had their college work paid for by their employer. Interestingly, over one-half of those with an employer-paid arrangement had household incomes greater than \$30,000. Thus, while employer-paid arrangements are very commendable, they provided assistance to those nontraditional students who needed it least.

Of the campus services available, a significant percentage of the nontraditional students used the campus Counseling Center. This was not surprising because these students, more than traditional-aged students, often had specific concerns and problems that tended to complicate college attendance. Obviously they were made aware of the

Counseling Center services.

Also, it was found that many of the respondents had used the Learning Skills Center. It seemed that this group had many good candidates for the skills center because many had been absent from college for some time and needed help acquiring effective study habits.

It also seemed that these students were primary candidates for using a support group because of their various hurdles in attending school, yet only 4.7 percent made use of support groups. Perhaps there were insufficient support groups available, or perhaps they were not publicized well enough. Of the seventeen students who participated in a support group, fifteen were women. This lends credence to the stereotype that men are more reluctant to seek out this type of activity because they may feel this could be perceived as a sign of weakness.

The data revealed that nontraditional students rarely attended any campus athletic or cultural events and were not active in student clubs and organizations. They appeared to be interested in class attendance and little else. They did not experience college in the same way that more traditional undergraduates did. Their approach to college was all business; they did not look to college to provide them with rewarding social experiences. Perhaps it was because they did not have time because of work, family responsibilities and commuting time, or perhaps it was because they already

had a social life away from the campus while the typical undergraduate living on campus relies, to some extent, upon campus activities for his/her social life. Or, perhaps campus events were not publicized so that these people could readily discover what was available. Most likely, though, the data revealed that nontraditional students "get in" and "get out" and, for the most part, did not care what happened on the campus besides the classes they wanted. They developed their social lives around their jobs, families, church or whatever, but not the campus.

The nontraditional students indicated that they felt they responded more in class than did their traditional counterparts. One possible reason for their increased class participation may have been that they simply had more to offer; they had experienced more of life and consequently were more likely to use concrete examples from everyday life or from the workplace that applied to the subject of the day.

Another factor causing nontraditional students to speak out more in class may have centered on the fact that they were less likely to be intimidated by instructors and less likely to be in awe of someone referred to as a professor or a doctor. They are more difficult to "spoon feed" or indoctrinate. Older students, depending upon their background and experiences, may have a greater experiential base than the instructor who often may rely primarily upon ;

theoretical framework. This diversity added by the older student could go a long way to increase the productivity of and interest in classroom discussion.

The respondents also felt that they visited more with instructors outside the classroom than did their traditional counterparts. Perhaps this propensity to visit more with instructors is related to the fact that nontraditional students were closer to the instructor in terms of age, and also because these students may require a bit more attention from instructors because of particular needs and considerations. For example, the nontraditional students are more likely to need extra help regarding use of the library or other resources and they are more likely than traditional students to have conditions in their lives that cause them to be late or to miss class.

As well as feeling comfortable with their instructors, most of the respondents felt very comfortable with the younger students. Perhaps because older students are more common today and because they have received more attention, nontraditional students did not seem to cause any great reaction among traditional students. Fifteen or twenty years ago one may have gotten a very different response concerning this matter.

Nontraditional students, many of whom are busy with jobs and family responsibilities, studied, as one student put it, "when and wherever I can get the time." It appears

that studying is worked into schedules after other more important things are taken care of. Unlike traditional students, many nontraditional students simply cannot rank studying as their highest priority. However, because of the demands upon their time, one would suspect that nontraditional students use their study time very efficiently.

The study revealed that the students felt somewhat anxious about returning/beginning college, primarily because of a concern about their study habits and a fear of not getting good grades. This type of response was not unexpected in that returning to studying and the pressure to get good grades after an absence from this type of environment would be somewhat anxiety producing for almost anyone.

College attendance was shown to have a tremendously positive effect upon the self-image of the respondents. It helped them feel much more self-confident and in control of their lives. Interestingly, more blue collar workers than white collar workers indicated that college attendance had made them more aware of their inadequacies. However, this was not totally surprising in that blue collar people probably had further to go to reach their occupational goals and, as the above data showed, they were more likely to feel intimidated by college and out of place.

It seemed very possible that attending college could

have a very profound effect upon those close to the student, especially a spouse and children. In some cases people quit jobs to return to college thus lowering the family's standard of living. The extra time needed to study could cause adjustments in everyone's schedule and could mean that others in the family must assume new duties and play new roles. Typically the nontraditional student is not able to do as many things around the home and has less time for his/her spouse and children.

College attendance by one spouse can mean emotional and intellectual growth for the student while the spouse not attending college may not experience this same growth. This differential growth could lead to problems in which one spouse may "outgrow" his/her mate and not be content in the marriage. This study, however, indicated that four times as many married respondents felt that they had grown closer together than felt that they were growing apart. Perhaps the college attendance of one person caused the spouse and the children to look upon the effort as a family effort and, consequently, they all rallied to take up the slack caused by mom or dad returning to college.

A significant percentage of the married respondents felt that they were not spending enough time together. This may not adversely affect the relationship if the time spent together is quality and if the couple feels strongly that they will be rewarded for their sacrifices later, i.e.,

delayed gratification. There have been numerous instances where a husband took care of the domestic chores while his wife studied or attended class and an equal number of or more instances in which the wife was the sole economic support of the household while the husband went to school. This type of teamwork can bring couples and families closer together. Couples who agree on their goals can endure being together less for short periods of time if they know it will profit them later.

It seemed that those marriages that suffered from college attendance did so mostly because of an inability of the other spouse to adjust to a "new," perhaps more confident and assertive mate, and also because of the time pressures that this added activity put upon the relationship.

In those cases where the family support was provided, it appeared that college attendance increased the sense of pride and mutual respect.

Perhaps the conclusion that can be drawn was that those marriages that were already solid grew even stronger as a result of one spouse seeking to improve him/herself through college attendance, while those marriages that were not very strong found this to be another "straw" leading to the breakup of the marriage. Most likely the marriages which experienced the most difficulty were those in which power had not been shared equally causing the more dominant person

to be threatened by the other person's growth. This would be especially true in the cases of a college-attending wife becoming a threat to her dominating husband. Another factor that could be instrumental in the families in which the support system worked well concerns the fact that further education could lead to better job opportunities which would lead to a better life style for the entire family.

It is expected that college students would make new friends on whichever campus they attended. However, because nontraditional students spent much less time on campus than traditional students and, for the most part, came on campus just for class than then left to go on with their other duties, it was not very surprising to notice that 47 percent of the respondents did not check either of the responses which mentioned making new friends. As was mentioned above many nontraditional students seemed to retain their previous social lives and perhaps did not look to college to provide them with social opportunities to increase their friendships, or, perhaps, insufficient opportunities were made available for these students to get together and socialize in an environment that allowed friendships to grow and prosper.

There can be little doubt, however, that college attendance did affect interpersonal relationships with family members and friends. Intellectual growth and a college degree usually lead one to socialize with others o

a similar educational background and a similar occupational level. This change could be more gradual for nontraditional students, many of whom already had established friendships, than it was for traditional students just entering adulthood. In marriage a key thing for nontraditional students to be tuned into is the possibility of the differential growth causing the couple to pull apart or to lose interest in each other. However, the data from this study did not show it to be a serious problem for most nontraditional students.

Overall the respondents indicated a high level of satisfaction with their college experience. This satisfaction could be indicative of several factors. Perhaps they were satisfied with the experience because it made them feel good about themselves as they indicated above; also, many indicated that they enjoyed the give and take of a learning environment. Their satisfaction could be related to the fact that they were achieving satisfactorily and receiving good grades or that their end goal of graduation did not seem so far off. Also, it could be that they were finding their classes to be well taught and enjoyable.

Though the nontraditional students seemed to be quite satisfied with their college experience, they did offer a list of suggestions that any college hoping to appeal to the nontraditional student should heed. The most frequently

listed suggestion for the university concerned the availability of evening classes. It was not surprising that a significant number listed this item. Since many nontraditional students are employed during the day, and/or have conflicts with child care responsibilities, evenings are the time that they are available to take classes. Furthermore, UNI does not currently have a comprehensive evening program that would enable a student to take most or all of the coursework necessary to earn a bachelor's degree in the evenings. In fact, a case could be made that UNI could have more nontraditional students if a comprehensive evening program were initiated. As things are currently, students never know from one semester to the next what will be offered in the evenings and, consequently, cannot plan. A certain frustration came clearly into focus from the comments concerning this issue. Some of these people wanted to finish a degree but did not see how they could do it under the current arrangement.

Although only 5 percent of the respondents offered comments about the quality of instruction, these comments may have some significance in that nontraditional students may tend to evaluate instruction more critically than the younger, traditional students. Most nontraditional students are in the work force and thus understand the evaluative procedures that they go through at their jobs. Their extra years of life experience better qualify them to be critica

of instructors' performances than their younger colleagues. Secondly, nontraditional students usually pay their own way and consequently tended to be more critical consumers than someone who was having his/her way paid by parents. Thirdly, instruction is the only reason why nontraditional students attend college. As the above data revealed, they do not attend for the social activities or for campus life. If they do not receive quality instruction, they receive nothing from college. Their time is important and they do not feel that they can waste it in an unproductive class especially since they come from off-campus and may have made arrangements for child care, car pooling and job schedules to get there. Since the price they paid for their education is a higher one, they were likely to have higher expectations than their younger colleagues.

Some students indicated that greater instructor flexibility was needed. They did not seem to be asking for leniency or privileges, but rather understanding.

Other concerns expressed included class availability, the registration procedures and parking. As with the other concerns expressed above, registration is a greater problem for those who do not live on campus and are faced with problems just getting the time to register. Perhaps expanded hours and a telephone commitment, rather than a signature, would expedite this process.

In view of what was revealed in this study, it was not surprising that parking posed a problem for some. Most nontraditional students came to campus for class and then left. Their need to get in and get out quickly because of their time limitations is not helped when they spend twenty minutes looking for a parking place or walking fifteen minutes because they couldn't find one very close. Parking is a problem on many campuses. However, it is even greater at UNI because the campus is rather closed with very little parking parking close in, except for staff. Seemingly minor things like scheduling procedures and parking problems can be major problems for a student on a tight work or child care schedule who has driven many miles to campus.

Several students felt that they needed better academic advising. Unlike traditional students, nontraditional students do not live on campus with other students with who they can discuss scheduling concerns, probably do not discuss their academic concerns with their parents, and often do not know all the "ins and outs" of campus life because they have been away from school for a while. For these reasons, nontraditional students must have access to good advising. They are already getting a late start on their college careers; they do not have the time or money to waste on courses that do not help them with their program.

Though some of the students complained about a lack of financial aid and some felt that tuition rates should be

lowered, it is the opinion of this writer that the tuition rates at public universities are a tremendous bargain. Students, both traditional and nontraditional, need to realize that they only pay a fraction of the actual cost of their education and that higher education in this country was never meant to be free. In fairness, however, it must be pointed out that the financial sacrifices of the nontraditional students greatly exceed those of traditional students. Nontraditional students are much less likely to take spring trips to the south, and are unlikely to receive aid from parents. They are to be commended for their financial sacrifices.

Several students indicated a desire for a special student orientation program for older students and well-publicized support groups. As was mentioned before, nontraditional students are less likely than traditional students to know others in a similar situation to talk to about their problems and concerns. For one thing, there are so many fewer nontraditional students than traditional students, and, secondly, they are so much more widely dispersed than traditional students. They do not room with someone with similar student concerns and probably do not car pool with someone who did. College can be a lonely experience for someone who is older and more isolated than most students. Obviously support groups can be very helpful. The only support group currently active for

nontraditional students is a Wednesday noon brown-bag lunch meeting in the student union. Perhaps some people do not know about it, or perhaps it does not fit into their schedules.

One thing that this study revealed was that there are almost as many different situations for nontraditional students as there are students. There is no consistent pattern as there is with traditional undergraduate students; many of the tried and true methods for operating a college campus do not apply to this group. Colleges that wish to attract nontraditional students must take these differences into consideration.

The study also showed conclusively that there is a great difference between the college experience of a traditional student and that of a nontraditional student. Nontraditional students partake of only a portion of the college experience. They miss that aspect of college known as student life, especially as it is known by on-campus students. Nontraditional students do not participate in the socialization aspects of the college experience that are part of growing up for traditional students. For the most part, they do not participate in the late night discussions in the dorms, the athletic events, the clubs, the socializing over coffee or colas in the student union, the meals in the cafeterias, the dating, the trips to the bars, the study groups in the libraries, and all the other

experiences that make up the group or communal life of traditional-aged college students.

Nontraditional students would be less likely to let college attendance affect all of those areas of the life that traditional college students typically have affected, such as an appreciation for cultural events, more cosmopolitan interests, whom they marry, whom they live with and so forth. Because they experienced college differently in life and experienced college in a different manner than traditional students, nontraditional students are more likely to have college influence their lives in quite the same ways. Or, put another way, when the aging nontraditional student looks back upon his or her college days, he or she is likely to have an entirely different group of memories than the traditional student. While nontraditional students have the advantage of being more motivated, of having better study habits and of knowing more clearly what they want from college, both in terms of an education and how it relates to their career goals, one of the main disadvantages of the nontraditional student might face is that of not participating fully in the college experience, of not viewing the college years as part of their formative, young adult years. However, if one believes in the value of education, it is very obvious that attending college at any time is better than not attending college at all. This study distinctly pointed out the many rewards earned by

nontraditional students.

Along with illustrating the college experiences of nontraditional students, several implications for colleges and universities were manifested in this study. Schools that seek to serve nontraditional students may wish to consider some of the following:

1. Provide a comprehensive selection of classes during the evening hours. This would also mean that student services offices would have to be open later.
2. Establish one or more support groups for nontraditional students with well-publicized meetings.
3. Establish a newsletter that would routinely be mailed to all nontraditional students in order to keep them posted on what is happening that may be of interest to them.
4. Make departments, faculty members and advisors aware of the specific needs and concerns of nontraditional students.
5. Have an orientation session each term for nontraditional students.
6. Simplify the registration process so that much of it can be done over the phone.

As indicated in Chapter One, the nontraditional student is a growing segment of the college population. Although they do not need preferential treatment, their unique needs and situations deserve some consideration.

One idea for a future study would be to examine the lives of a group of nontraditional students some time after they have graduated from or quit attending college. At this time one may be able to obtain a better understanding of the effects of college for this type of student. One would suspect that, as shown in this study, the college experience would show itself to be a valuable experience both emotionally and economically.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Andrews, Theodore E., W. Robert Houston, and Brenda L. Bryant. Adult Learners (A Research Study). Washington, D.C.: Association of Teacher Educators, 1981.
- Apps, Jerrold W. The Adult Learner on Campus. Chicago: Follet Publishing, 1981.
- Chickering, Arthur W. Commuting Versus Resident Students. Washington: Jossey-Bass, 1974.
- _____, and Associates. The Modern American College. Washington: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1981.
- DiSilvestro, Frank R., ed. Advising and Counseling Adult Learners. Washington: Jossey-Bass, 1981.
- Farmer, Martha L. Counseling Services for Adults in Higher Education. Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1971.
- Sanford, Nevitt, and Joseph Axelrod, eds. College and Character. Berkeley, CA: Montague, Inc., 1979.
- Solomon, Lewis C., and Joanne J. Gordon. The Characteristics and Needs of Adults in Postsecondary Education. Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath and Company, 1981.
- Weinstock, Ruth. The Graying of the Campus. New York: Educational Facilities Laboratories, 1978.

Periodicals

- Arbeiter, Solomon. "Profile of the Adult Learner." The College Board Review, Winter 1976-77, pp. 20-27.
- Bishop, John, and Jane Van Dyk. "Can Adults be Hooked on College?" Journal of Higher Education, January/February 1977, pp. 39-59.

- Kasworm, Carol E. "Student Services for the Older Undergraduate Student." Journal of College Student Personnel, March 1980, pp. 163-69.
- Kuh, George D., and Frank P. Ardaiole. "Adult Learners and Traditional Age Freshmen: Comparing the 'New' Pool with the 'Old' Pool of Students." Research in Higher Education, 10, No. 3 (1979), 207-19.
- Kuh, George D., and J. Thomas Sturgis. "Looking at the University Through Different Sets of Lens: Adult Learners and Traditional Age Students' Perceptions of the University Environments." Journal of College Student Personnel, November 1980, pp. 483-90.
- Lance, Larry M., Joan Lourie, and Cynthia Mayo. "Needs of Reentry University Students." Journal of College Student Personnel, November 1979, pp. 479-85.
- Lutz, David A. "Who are the Nontraditional Learners?" The College Board Review, Fall 1978, pp. 26-30.
- Morstain, B. R., and John C. Smart. "A Motivational Typology of Adult Learners." Journal of Higher Education, November-December 1977, pp. 665-79.
- Queeney, Donna S. "Adult Learners: A Focus on Who They Are, What They Need, and the Problems They Face." Continuing Higher Education, Spring 1984, pp. 2-6.
- Rawlins, Melanie E. "Life Made Easier for the Over-Thirty Undergrads." Personnel and Guidance Journal, October 1979, pp. 139-43.
- _____, and Kathy Davies. "Today's Challenge: Adults in College." Lifelong Learning: The Adult Years, May 1981, pp. 12-13, 27.

Other Sources

- Malin, Jane T., and Others. Adults Attending College: Goals and Change. ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 177 325.
- U.S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 335, April 1979.

APPENDIX A

ENROLLMENT STATISTICS FOR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER
EDUCATION AND POPULATION STATISTICS

Enrollment in All Institutions of Higher Education, by Age, Sex, and Attendance Status, with Intermediate Alternative Projections: 50 States and D.C., Fall 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985, and 1990 (in thousands)

National Center for Education Statistics

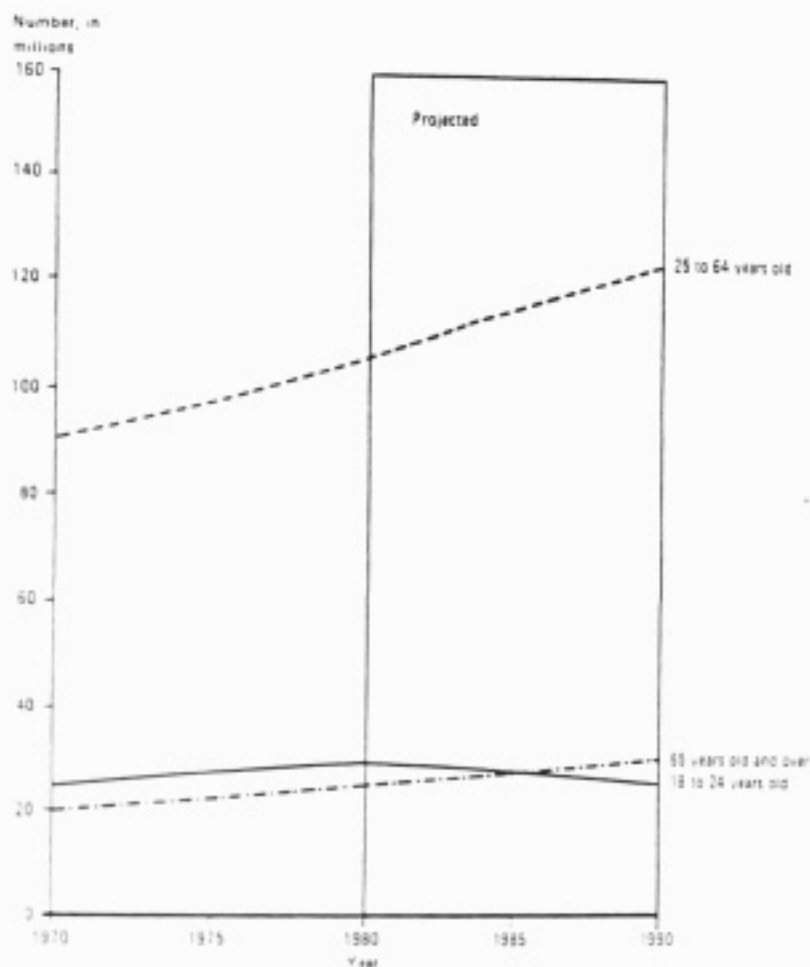
Age	1970 (Estimated)			1975 (Estimated)			1980 (Estimated)			1985 (Projected)			1990 (Projected)		
	Total	Full-time	Part-time	Total	Full-time	Part-time	Total	Full-time	Part-time	Total	Full-time	Part-time	Total	Full-time	Part-time
Total	8,581	3,815	2,766	11,180	5,842	4,342	12,281	7,098	5,183	12,174	6,781	5,283	12,101	6,526	5,575
18 and 19 years	258	241	17	278	242	36	247	216	32	218	194	24	221	179	42
19 and 20 years	2,599	1,406	1,193	2,786	1,510	1,276	2,899	1,581	1,318	2,918	1,647	1,271	2,975	1,704	1,271
20 and 21 years	1,880	1,047	833	2,242	1,052	1,190	2,424	1,081	1,343	2,207	1,055	1,152	1,995	1,077	1,918
22 to 24 years	1,437	881	556	1,754	1,008	746	1,988	1,172	816	2,011	1,200	811	1,966	1,189	777
25 to 29 years	1,075	607	468	1,274	690	584	1,375	711	664	1,251	742	509	1,229	701	528
30 to 34 years	487	100	387	567	276	291	588	1,045	264	578	1,340	297	1,043	1,452	222
35 years and over	524	154	370	1,384	287	1,097	1,422	190	1,232	1,821	250	1,571	2,122	220	1,902
Men	5,244	2,509	1,735	6,148	3,026	2,122	6,814	3,689	2,125	6,817	3,522	2,295	6,772	3,229	2,443
18 and 19 years	129	124	5	138	126	12	98	84	14	90	78	12	82	72	10
19 and 20 years	1,349	766	583	1,387	788	599	1,275	1,228	47	1,158	1,027	132	1,140	1,020	120
20 and 21 years	1,085	600	485	1,248	1,052	196	1,280	1,108	172	1,156	994	162	1,044	894	150
22 to 24 years	884	550	334	1,048	606	442	1,083	606	477	1,066	592	474	973	521	452
25 to 29 years	583	327	256	674	374	300	694	379	315	1,130	448	682	1,107	429	678
30 to 34 years	308	72	236	357	184	173	378	129	249	642	158	484	690	171	519
35 years and over	418	75	343	504	132	372	507	77	430	874	104	770	1,188	122	1,066
Women	3,337	2,311	1,031	5,032	2,816	2,220	5,467	3,409	3,058	5,357	3,259	3,088	5,329	3,297	3,132
18 and 19 years	129	117	12	140	116	24	149	132	17	128	116	12	119	107	12
19 and 20 years	1,250	640	610	1,399	722	677	1,624	1,252	372	1,259	1,120	139	1,234	1,083	151
20 and 21 years	795	447	348	994	450	544	1,149	473	676	1,051	463	588	951	477	474
22 to 24 years	553	331	222	706	332	374	905	487	418	1,005	507	498	974	500	474
25 to 29 years	492	280	212	600	316	284	679	332	347	921	294	627	964	321	643
30 to 34 years	179	28	151	210	92	118	207	126	81	521	128	393	718	151	567
35 years and over	406	79	327	730	154	576	915	113	802	1,447	146	1,301	1,234	172	1,062

NOTE: Because of rounding, totals may not add to totals.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Fall Enrollment in Higher Education*; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, *Current Population Reports: School Enrollment—Sex and Economic Characteristics of Students*, Series P-20.

Population of Selected Age Groups in the United States

National Center for Education Statistics



The 18- to 24-year-old age group, the traditional market for higher educational enrollments, will decrease during the 1980's, but the population aged 25 to 64 years is projected to increase. Increased enrollment of older students could serve to counteract the impact of declining enrollment of 18- to 24-year-olds.

Population¹ of Adults 18 Years Old and Over, by Age Group:

National Center for Education Statistics

Age Group	Estimated		Projected	
	1970	1975	1980	1985
Number, in Thousands				
18 to 24	24,687	27,604	29,463	27,853
18 to 21	14,707	16,484	17,117	15,442
22 to 24	9,980	11,120	12,346	12,411
25 to 64	90,410	97,280	105,789	115,429
25 to 29	13,718	16,932	18,930	20,581
30 to 34	11,576	13,987	17,242	19,278
35 to 39	11,151	11,625	14,033	17,274
40 to 44	11,991	11,191	11,688	14,102
45 to 49	12,147	11,789	11,030	11,526
50 to 54	11,163	11,979	11,668	10,931
55 to 59	9,998	10,536	11,401	11,122
60 to 64	8,666	9,241	9,797	10,615
65 and over	20,087	22,420	24,927	27,305

¹ Includes Armed Forces overseas.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-25, No. 721 (1970 and 1975), No. 704 (1980 to 1990).

APPENDIX B

COVER LETTER

Center for Social and Behavioral Research



College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls, Iowa 50614
(319) 273-2105

May 15, 1984

Dear Student:

We are conducting a survey of UNI undergraduate students who are twenty-five years old and older. The purpose of the study is to learn more about this group of students both in terms of personal characteristics and certain attitudes they may have about attending college. Your name was selected at random for inclusion in our study.

Enclosed is a brief questionnaire which we would appreciate your completing and returning in the envelope provided. How you personally respond to the questions will only be known to you since we do not ask for your name.

By your participation in this study you will be providing valuable information which can be used by educators, administrators and others in order to better serve older undergraduate students.

Thank you for your time and your participation in this survey.

Sincerely,

James E. Bodensteiner
Project Director

Encl.

Research and service through the departments of
Education • Geography • History • Home Economics • Political Science •
Psychology • Social Work • Sociology and Anthropology

APPENDIX C

SURVEY OF UNI STUDENTS

CENTER FOR SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA
CEDAR FALLS, IOWA

Survey of UNI Students

Directions: Please read each question carefully and answer by using a checkmark or filling in the answer where appropriate.

1. Did you start college immediately upon completion of high school?

_____ No _____ Yes (If yes, please skip to question 3a and continue)

2. What was your reason(s) for not starting college upon completion of high school? (Please check all that apply)

_____ Got married
_____ Gained employment
_____ Joined or was drafted into the Armed Forces
_____ Could not afford to start college
_____ Saw no need for continuing my education
_____ Felt I would not like college
_____ Did not feel confident enough to start college
_____ Did not feel I was academically prepared for college
_____ Family matters arose which prevented me from starting college
_____ Other (Please specify): _____

- 3a. Is UNI the first college you have ever attended?

_____ No _____ Yes (If yes, please skip to question 4 and continue)

- 3b. If UNI is not the first college you have attended, how many other colleges have you attended? _____

- 3c. What was the reason for leaving the other college(s) you attended? (Please check all that apply)

_____ Financial
_____ Marriage
_____ Employment
_____ Personal matters
_____ Family matters
_____ Poor academic standing
_____ To transfer to a better or more appropriate college
_____ Other (Please specify): _____

4. What is your primary reason for attending college? (Please check all that apply)
- ☐ Career advancement
 - ☐ Career change
 - ☐ Salary increase
 - ☐ Personal growth and development
 - ☐ A way to meet people
 - ☐ Prestige/status
 - ☐ Extra time to fill
 - ☐ Other (Please specify): _____
5. What occupation do you hope to obtain upon completion of your education? _____
6. How are you financing your education? (Please check all that apply)
- ☐ Own money
 - ☐ Help from parents
 - ☐ Scholarship
 - ☐ Financial aid
 - ☐ Private loan
 - ☐ G.I. Bill/VEAP
 - ☐ Paid by employer
7. Which of the following UNI campus services have you used, if any?
- ☐ Admissions office
 - ☐ Counseling office
 - ☐ Child care services
 - ☐ Culture center
 - ☐ Learning skills center
 - ☐ Student advising service
 - ☐ Placement office
 - ☐ Support group for returning or older students
8. Approximately how many times have you attended the following campus events or activities in the last 12 months?
- ☐ Athletic events
 - ☐ Drama/plays/films
 - ☐ Musical events/concerts
 - ☐ Guest speakers
 - ☐ Art gallery exhibitions
 - ☐ Social events/parties
 - ☐ Student organizations/clubs
 - ☐ Departmental activities

9. In class, do you find yourself speaking or answering questions more often than other students, about the same as other students, or less often than other students?

_____ More often _____ About the same _____ Less often

10. In class, do you feel you have more to offer because you may be older or have more experience than your classmates?

_____ Yes _____ No

11. In class, do instructors call on you or seek your opinion more often than younger students?

_____ Yes _____ No

12. If you visit with your instructors outside of class, do you think you visit with them more often than younger students do, less often, or about the same?

_____ More often
 _____ Less often
 _____ About the same
 _____ Not sure
 _____ Do not visit with them.

13. Do you feel that any of your instructors are intimidated by you because of your age and life experiences?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Not sure

14. Which one of the following best describes your feelings in relation to younger students in your classes? (Please check all that apply)

_____ I feel out-of-place because I am older than most other students.
 _____ I feel somewhat uncomfortable with most other students.
 _____ I feel very comfortable with most other students.
 _____ I feel that I am more respected because of my age and experience.

15. Where do you do most of your studying? (Please check one answer)

_____ Place of residence
 _____ UNI library
 _____ Student union
 _____ Other UNI building
 _____ Other (Please specify): _____

16. When do you usually study? (Please check one answer)

☐ During the day at home
☐ During the day on campus
☐ On weekends
☐ During the evening at home
☐ During the evening on campus
☐ Other (Please specify): _____

17. What particular concerns or feelings did you have, if any, when you first attended UNI? (Please check all that apply)

☐ Not getting good grades
☐ Felt out-of-place
☐ Felt intimidated by the college environment
☐ Concerned about my study habits
☐ General feeling of anxiety

18. What effect, if any, has attending college had on your feelings about yourself? (Please check all that apply)

☐ Has helped me to be more self-confident
☐ Has helped me feel more in control of my life
☐ Has made me more aware of my inadequacies
☐ Other (Please specify): _____

19. What effect, if any, has attending college had on your relationship with your spouse or others you may live with? (Please check all that apply)

☐ We have grown closer together
☐ We are growing apart
☐ We are not spending enough time with each other
☐ Has had no effect
☐ Other (Please specify): _____

20. What effect, if any, has college had on your relationships with friends you knew before you started attending college? (Please check all that apply)

☐ We have grown apart because we have less in common
☐ We have grown apart and I have made new friends in college
☐ We have grown apart, but I have made new friends in college
☐ Has had no effect
☐ Other (Please specify): _____

21. Which of the following are the most desirable times for you to attend class? Please rank order the time periods by assigning the number "1" to the most desirable time, the number "2" to the second most desirable time, and so forth.

☐ Mornings ☐ Afternoons ☐ Evenings ☐ Saturdays

22. How satisfied are you with your college experience so far?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Somewhat satisfied
- ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

23. What could the University of Northern Iowa do in order to enhance your college experience and make it more convenient, enjoyable and profitable?

In order to have a better understanding of the students participating in this survey, we would appreciate your answering the following background information questions.

24. What is your sex? ☐ Male ☐ Female

25. What was your age on your last birthday?

26. What is your present student classification?

- ☐ Freshman ☐ Sophomore ☐ Junior ☐ Senior
- ☐ Other

27. For how many hours are you currently enrolled at UNI?

28. What is your present marital status?

- ☐ Never married
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Separated/divorced
- ☐ Widowed

29. Are you the parent or guardian of children living with you in your home?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

30. Are you presently employed? ☐ No (Skip to question 31 and continue.)

- ☐ Yes — Part-time (less than 40 hours per week)
- ☐ Yes — Full-time

31. If you are employed, what kind of work do you do? What is your main occupation called?
-

32. What was your total family household income in 1983 before taxes?

_____ Less than \$5,000	_____ \$20,000 - 24,999
_____ \$ 5,000 - 9,999	_____ \$25,000 - 29,999
_____ \$10,000 - 14,999	_____ \$30,000 - 39,999
_____ \$15,000 - 19,999	_____ \$40,000 or more

33. Do you live on- or off-campus?

_____ On-campus _____ Off-campus

34. If you live off-campus, do you own or rent your present housing unit?

_____ Own _____ Rent _____ Rent-free

— THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY —

APPENDIX D

RESPONDENT COMMENTS

COMMENTS

Following are some additional comments given by the respondents:

- Ignore the fact that we are older.
- Have a phone number to call to facilitate car pooling with others.
- Lockers on campus that I could use all the time would be nice.
- Offer more general education classes through extension courses, telecourses and correspondence courses.
- Have more non-credit courses like basic English.
- Have another place to eat besides Hardee's.
- Have some part-time student sections.
- Operate a bookstore. I sometimes travel to other college campuses to buy my textbooks cheaper.
- A food service for off-campus students.
- I would appreciate having a way so that an emergency message could be given to me. My biggest fear is that something will happen to my kids and no one will be able to get hold of me.
- Have lockers available in the union or some other place solely for the use of students who commute.
- Make family housing more economical.
- Make a place to get away from the noise in the union.
- A club room for older students to meet and study in the union.
- Why should I have to take physical education when I play tennis and volleyball the year-round?